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by

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A SAILOR'S ADVENTURES.

CHAPTER I.

ON BOARD SHIP.

"Is the captain on board?" was the short question asked on the morning of the 2nd August, 18—, by a sunburnt, broad-built man. He might have been called a gentleman, as far as outward appearance went, for he was dressed in a suit of fine cloth, and wore a new silk hat and very fine linen. His large, brawny hands, innocent of gloves, would have done honour to a man in a fustian jacket, and naturally enough induced the idea that their owner belonged rather to the working-classes than to one of the higher ranks of society. For all that, he seemed to incline towards the "favoured few," or, at least, to reckon himself among them.

The man who uttered the inquiry with which our chapter commences stood in one of the common boats of Sydney, and had taken hold of the ship's ladder suspended over the side, while he put the question to the mate. This important functionary of the *Pelican* happened at the time to be carelessly gazing over the side of the good ship, which having left the harbour, lay in the bay of Sydney, ready to sail on the following morning.

"Is the captain on board?" he repeated. "He is, sir," was the sailor's reply. On receiving this answer, the stranger put his foot upon the ladder, and after exchanging a few words with the boatmen, who made

their craft fast as if they intended to await his return, stepped on board the vessel. The deck of the *Pelican* presented no extraordinary features. Some of the crew were engaged taking in water from the tank; others were busy repairing the rigging and tarring patches in the deck. Water-tanks are small craft filled with water. They go alongside ships that may be in want of a supply, which is pumped through long leather pipes into casks kept on board to receive it. The *Pelican's* carpenter was caulking the deck, and the monotonous blows of his wooden hammer were almost the only noise to be heard on board. Everything was quiet and still. Although each member of the crew seemed to be employed in some occupation or other—for even the mate was engaged measuring the log-line—two young men regarded their proceedings with lazy indifference. They walked loungingly up and down the deck, only halting now and then near one of the well-employed groups. Occasionally they stopped to look down at the boat, and then again continued their walk. They were dressed in loose summer clothes, short, thin jackets, and broad-brimmed hats made of the leaf of the cabbage-palm. These were adorned with a broad, black ribbon, having the words "*Water Police*" inscribed in yellow letters. The stranger cast a rapid glance along the deck, and giving a scrutinizing look at the rigging, walked to the poop, and, without saying a word to any of the crew, went down into the cabin.

"Do you know that man?" said one policeman to the other. "No," his companion answered; "can you tell me his name?"

"You will be sure to make his acquaintance," said the first, with a laugh. "It's Captain Oilytt, of the *Boreas;* he is going to Calcutta. The ship will sail on Tuesday."

"Have none of the crew deserted?"

"Not yet; but I heard yesterday that they will go to-morrow. I might easily prevent this; but that would not suit our book. The greater number of the crew

are foreigners, and if a good reward is offered, we are likely enough to catch them."

"Where do they generally go in the evening?" asked the other. "Have you kept your eye upon them?"

"Oh, yes, I have been watching them for the last week. They now resort mostly to the Elephant and Castle, in Pitt-street, and several times they have been in the houses in Kent-street, too; but it appears that they will in future be found more frequently in the upper part of Pitt-street. Some of them are Frenchmen, the others are Germans. There are but four Englishmen on board, and some of their countrymen live in Pitt-street."

"They won't feel inclined to betray them," observed the second officer, who evidently had not been long in his new calling.

"Not inclined to betray them?" rejoined the first, laughing. "Only let a good reward be offered, and I am pretty sure of the rest. All such people want is to earn money, and the means by which they get it are to them quite a matter of perfect indifference, so long as it don't bring them within the grasp of the law."

While this conversation, on points so nearly touching Captain Oilytt's interests had taken place upon deck, the worthy individual in question stepped into the officers' room of the *Pelican*, and, after exchanging a few words of greeting with the captain, whom he found sitting there, said:

"To-morrow, then, you mean to go? I see you have the police on deck. Are you afraid of some of your men attempting to desert?"

"Well, I am," replied Captain Howell, of the *Pelican*. "One cannot trust those fellows. They are treated as well on board my ship as on any other. No hard word is given to them, and nothing unnecessary or annoying exacted. My mate is a very quiet, orderly man; the treatment is good, the food well-prepared and substantial. I don't see that in any of these respects they have reason to complain of anything. For all

that, their minds are filled with these stories about the gold diggings. Who can wonder at it? The large lump found the other day has made all Sydney go mad, and why should my crew be an exception?—Besides, as soon as they set foot on shore, they are assailed by all kinds of land-sharks. These tempters do everything in their power to get them away from their ships. If, under the management of some sharp fellow, they get absolutely cleared out of their last penny and have not a rag to their backs, they are sold again to the captain of their ship, or to the master of a new one; for it is all the same to the enterprising friend of the sailor, provided he turns the matter to his own advantage. Sailors won't see these things in their true light; one may talk to them till one gets quite tired, and a thousand examples will not save them from falling into the old snare. They are all of them conceited enough to think themselves a great deal cleverer than those that have been cheated before, and they imagine that they shall be sure to manage things better than their comrades. So, you see, just to make my mind easy, and not to be left in the lurch at the last moment, I prefer spending a little money in taking the police on board—and I believe that money will not be thrown away."

"How much do you give the police per day?" asked Oilytt. "A guinea each man," replied the captain of the *Pelican*. "It is dear, but that cannot be helped."

"A guinea!" exclaimed Oilytt, astonished; "I would rather be excused. For that money I can protect my crew myself. I do not think so very much of what is called 'good treatment' on board ships. The men must of course have proper food and drink, their brandy and their rum; but then they should also know their station. For my part I have always done more by energy than by kindness and what you call treating them kindly. Sailors really don't wish to be treated kindly, and only laugh at you in their sleeves for such weakness. If I raise my hand, they know what it means, and Heaven be merciful to him who

dared to turn mutinous. I am obeyed—that's certain."

The steward, who was placing wine and glasses upon the table, heard these remarks, and looked at the speaker with a side-glance and a smile, partly of contempt and partly of pity. The speaker happened to look at him, and a serious expression instantly overspread the steward's countenance.

"And when do you mean to set sail?" asked Captain Howell. "Your ship is lying on the slip; is she not?"

"Yes; on Monday morning I shall take in the remainder of the horses, and on Tuesday morning I intend to put out into the bay; if the wind is favourable, I shall set sail the same evening, or, at the latest, on Wednesday morning."

"You have not had any cases of desertion yet?"

"Not one," said Oilytt, with a laugh; "my men have too much respect for me and themselves. They know well enough I should be sure to get them back again, and they would be miserable."

"As to getting them back again, that might prove a difficult question," said Howell, with a shake of his head; "and if I were you, I should not rely too implicitly upon it. Supposing, however, that by paying a large reward you do manage to get them back, do you think that is a cheaper way than giving a few pounds to the police?"

"I do not pay the reward. It does not cost me anything to get deserters back," said Oilytt. "As a matter of course, the reward is paid out of the men's wages; and I take good care to have a balance in hand sufficient to cover any expense of the kind."

"How about your time? For the rest is of less consequence. You must also reckon the extra expense for fodder and water, having the animals on board while you are waiting. Moreover, you will have to hire men at six shillings a-day to do the most indispensable work. I should not advise a man to take the police on board, if he's to stay in port for a week or a

fortnight; the expenses would certainly become heavy. When, however, a captain has all his cargo aboard, and is ready to sail in a day or two, he should not be afraid of the outlay of a few pounds. The temptation is too great now-a-days; one cannot reckon with any degree of certainty even upon the very best men. We were going to speak about our passage. You think of going through Torres Straits?"*

"I do not know yet," said Oilytt, emptying his glass at a draught, and filling it again. "I do not particularly fancy forcing my way through these shoals and reefs. I should prefer taking the passage round the south if one could only rely on the wind, and had not to be afraid of working up against the monsoon for the whole voyage. Have you ever sailed through Torres Straits?"

"No," said Captain Howell, "but the new charts recently issued are said to be excellent; and I shall, at any rate, try the passage of Raines Island."

The two captains remained for some time in earnest conversation upon the Torres Strait and its advantages or dangers. At last Captain Oilytt took his leave, and jumped into his boat, by which he was quickly conveyed to the Circular-wharf.

"There's somebody rowing," said a sailor from the rigging-yard, where he was engaged in certain tarring operations, to a comrade who came gliding down from above with a grease-pot, which he held fast in his teeth. "There's somebody rowing; I should not like to be in his place."

"That's the captain of the *Boreas*," replied the other. "Doesn't that fellow look as if he had been rolled in hot pepper for a month, and had then been rubbed down with vinegar? It is really the most wonderful

* There are two routes from Australia to the East Indies. The northern one is the shortest. It is by way of Torres Straits, between Australia and New Guinea, and dangerous to ships on account of reefs. In these Straits ships are obliged to remain at anchor during the night. The passage round the south coast of Australia is less perilous, though much longer.

thing under the sun that none of his men have run away from him."

"Run away! They'd like to do it, but they won't be able."

"Not be able? The ship is close in to the shore, and not a single policeman on board. With such chances as that, I'd like to see the mate, or boatswain, or even policeman that would hinder me not only from going away, but even from taking my kit. No, those fellows must have some particular game to play, or they would not have remained at their posts so long. Perhaps they mean to wait till the confusion of the last moment before they "up anchor." But that's a bad look out. If they're not very sharp, they may be just as badly off as we are ourselves. If I had not foolish-like allowed myself to be persuaded by you, I might now be working at the mines, and finding nuggets of gold as large as my head. The deuce take this sailor's life!"

"Don't despair. They say a miner's life is a good deal worse," replied the other. "It is true one is one's own master there, but the gains are a good deal more uncertain; and I, for my own part, don't believe in the yarns about those large lumps of gold."

The man with the tin grease-pot glided lower down, and thus the conversation was broken off.

CHAPTER II.

THE MARKET IN SYDNEY.

SATURDAY evening in Sydney affords the most attractive picture which the town, in general a lively place, can offer. Everybody seems to be bustling about, and such of the inhabitants as are not called out by business, are often impelled by curiosity to quit the quiet and privacy of home for a stroll through the market.

The different vendors endeavour to make their little stalls as attractive as possible, and the butchers in particular decorate their stalls with fine joints of fat mutton and beef. Large lumps of suet piled in columns or pillars, and here and there a kangaroo or wallobi suspended by the hind legs, gives a little change to the otherwise rather monotonous exhibition of viands.

The market at Sydney consists of four long, high, lofty buildings, laid out in a thoroughly practical manner. The place was at the first made commodious, in expectation of a considerable increase in the size of the town, and at the time our tale opens, only about half of the space was engaged. One large hall was entirely unoccupied, and another was but half filled with stalls. One division is devoted exclusively to the good things of life; and in this part, besides the stalls belonging to the butchers, the butter and cheese shops strike the eye, with their stores of eggs and large pieces of lard and butter, from among which the bright rich-coloured cheese peers out invitingly at the passer-by.

There were also several stalls for poultry. With respect to birds, the inhabitants of Sydney are not much better off than they are for meat. They get no change, because game and wild fowl, with the exception of wild duck, are not to be had; consequently, one endless round of fowls, pigeons, or turkeys, is their only resource. Further up the inner country, a great many different species of partridges abound, as well as quails and other kinds of game. But people who take the trouble of shooting them keep their game to themselves, and they are not brought into the Sydney market.

From this exhibition of so many various animals sacrificed to supply the wants of men, the visitor turns to a more agreeable department. As soon as he steps across the small alley, and enters the opposite hall, he reaches the section devoted to the sale of fruits and vegetable products. Here the visitor is surprised by enormous masses of oranges heaped up in all directions.

The Australian orange is one of the most excellent, and being cheap, is consumed in large quantities. Higher up will be found the pine-apples of Moreton Bay, whilst piles of cauliflowers and of other vegetables fill up the background. At the period of which we are speaking, the regular fruit season had not commenced, or else peaches and figs would have occupied a considerable space amongst the various products offered for sale.

The flower market did not take up much space. The inhabitants of Australia do not at present display much taste for flowers. In the whole market, not one really pretty bouquet could have been found. Flowers were naturally enough in small demand, and could not be expected in such a newly-formed community to equal in value the more substantial commodities, such as beef, cauliflowers, mutton, or groceries. Flowers are, in fact, only good to look at.

In this "vegetable hall," if the expression may be allowed, four sailors might have been observed sauntering along with the air of people who have, amongst other superfluities, plenty of time at their disposal. Their broad-brimmed hats and blue jackets betrayed their calling at a glance to the passer-by. They gazed with lazy indifference upon the masses of fruit, and, to their shame be it spoken, with scarcely more interest upon the really pleasant and friendly forms and faces which were gliding here and there amongst the stalls in search of the necessaries for the morrow. Their sole reason for visiting the place was because they had seen other folk going in that direction; and their walk was little more than a lazy lounge, or a shuffling of the feet upon the pavement.

"Come, Jack," said one of the four to another before him, "hold hard just a moment, and lay in half a dozen of these oranges."

"Have you any money?" said the man thus addressed, turning slowly round: "the governor would not let me have a copper to-night. He said he had entirely forgotten to bring any money with him, but

that he would give each of us a sovereign to-morrow morning, and then we might go on shore and enjoy a holiday. On Tuesday morning he will lay out into the bay. He was precious free and easy."

"Was he! Well, that's just one reason more for trusting him less than ever," observed the other. "He is deucedly afraid of our running away; and he deserves it richly, if one could but do it. The road to the diggings swarms with police, they say, and nobody here will hide us, the penalty is so heavy."

"Don't speak so loud," said the third. "Just now I saw our steward behind us, buying vegetables. If he were to catch a word, he would be sure to report it to the governor. It would suit his book exactly; he can't bear us, and does not trust us."

"He has good reasons for that," said the first, in a kind of menacing undertone, pulling his wide trousers higher up his hips. "In my present temper, I can't hardly trust myself; and I should not wonder, if I were to find myself to-morrow, or the day after, stowed away in some corner, very dark but jolly snug, crouching down most uncomfortably, until the *Boreas* is at the deuce, or at any other place that might suit her. It was bad enough to sail with such an old scoundrel; and now things are getting worse, as he tries to make slaves of us."

The one of the group who happened to have a little money on him, had remained during this conversation standing at the nearest fruit stall, and filled his hat with oranges.

"Where are the others, I wonder?" said he to his comrades, after having rejoined them. "I thought one of them told us he wished to see us somewhere about something."

"The others are at the Golden Cross, in Pitt-street"—was the reply. "It is an inn kept by an Irishman, and all of us were to meet there this evening."

"What are the Germans and Frenchmen doing at the Irishman's place?"

"Oh, he has a wife who comes from those places, I believe,—somewhere from the Rhine. She speaks French and German. Besides, there's a wonderfully pretty girl in the house. Jean is head over heels in love with her already."

"That's a thing that happens pretty often to Jean," interposed the Englishman, drily. "And he might have had that cheaper than by going all the way to Pitt-street. But let's be off. It's high time—it must be eight o'clock."

"The deuce! here's a pretty go!—the governor's coming," said one of the men; and as the others looked round, their worthy captain appeared close behind. He did not, however, see them, but was engaged in forcing a way through the crowd with his broad shoulders. In order to accomplish this, he kept pushing right and left; and he had evidently some particular object in view, for he looked neither to right nor to left, as his men kept staring stupidly at his tall, gigantic frame, and his round, ruddy face passing through the building.

"There he is," said the first man, laughing, "going full sail before the wind. I wonder what he is giving chase to."

"Most likely that little craft in front of him, in the loose black silk jacket. Do you think he saw us? He did not look this way."

"He never caught sight of us," replied another, with a laugh. "He has taken his course due north, and doesn't care a bit about us, so as we arrive in good time on board ship, and don't ask him for any money. For anything else, we may be hanged, without his caring. But come, let us keep straight through George-street, and down the little lane. We must turn round the corner, and then it's all smooth sailing, until we catch the sign of the Golden Cross hanging above the door."

The four sailors quitted the market-place, going down Market-street, towards Pitt-street. Near the

Court House two men in dark over-coats and were lurking, evidently on the watch. They loc after the sailors, and one of them asked, in a low t of voice,—

"Do you know to what ship they belong? One them said something in the market-place that seem rather suspicious. I should like to know where th are bound to. If I am not mistaken, I heard the nam of the *Boreas* mentioned by one of them. If the belong to that ship, we shall have to keep our eyes open."

"They won't go very far," replied the other, "and we shall only have to follow them."

The two men slowly tracked the four sailors until the latter disappeared within the door of the Golden Cross; then they remained standing opposite on the pavement.

"Shall we go in?" said one of them.

"Yes, by-and-bye, but not yet," replied the other.

"It is too soon. We must give them time to swallow half-a-dozen glasses or so."

With these significant words they went slowly down the street towards the theatre, in which direction, about this time of the day, the greatest crowd collected, and the bustle and excitement were at the highest. Let them go, gentle reader; they are nothing more than two detectives, and they will come back again ere long. Meanwhile, we will enter the Golden Cross, and see what kind of pastime is to be witnessed within the walls of that little colonial inn.

CHAPTER III.

THE SAILORS' INN.

THE Golden Cross was probably not distinguished from the numerous taverns to be found in Sydney, save by its singular sign-board. Its host was just like his fellow innkeepers, who, according to the stereotyped

phrase above the door, were "licensed to sell spirituous and fermented liquors." This phrase the worthy host translated by: "Permission to sell any kind of drug that may be poured into a vessel or drunk from a glass."

The interior looked clean, and even comfortable enough. It is evidently the interest of an innkeeper to attract guests, and much more still, to keep them. The large window in the middle, that occupied half the space of the wall, was painted white on the inside, and on this ground appeared the words, "Wine Vaults," and right and left of it, "London Porter," and "Bass's Ale," elegantly surrounded by wreaths of vine and hops. Ranged upon the shining shelves inside were a number of inviting-looking little casks, the nature of their contents being made known by inscriptions in nice gilt letters. In addition, fine bottles with small metal plates, bearing various titles, might also be observed.

Right and left was ranged the heavy artillery, consisting of a dark mass of bottles of ale and porter, and below lay little round glass bottles, containing soda-water and lemonade. A placard on the wall, displaying a neatly-painted soda-water bottle, announced the valuable address of the manufacturer to anybody who might take the trouble to read it.

At the bar the engine with ivory handles, fixed into pipes leading to the vaults, enabled the landlord and his servants to produce at every demand a fresh draught of ale and porter. The room was fitted with small tables and chairs, encased, as it were, in little snug wooden partitions, in which, at the most, four persons could find room to seat themselves comfortably. These boxes were furnished with curtains instead of doors.

At one side of the bar stood the landlord, a square figure, his face very much the worse for the small-pox, with red hair and little cunning eyes, and a peculiar humorous expression round the lips. This was the Irishman MacCarthy, the owner of the "Golden" and

of another "Cross," who, in white apron and little cap bedecked with flowers, stood on the other side of the bar, and supplied the wants of his various customers. The saucy barmaid, Polly, took the beverages ordered to the guests, flirting with them to her heart's content. MacCarthy was busily engaged uncorking bottles and cleaning the glasses.

Mrs. MacCarthy may be described in a few words. She was an Alsatian, with black glossy hair and dark fiery eyes, about thirty years of age, but with a much more youthful appearance. She was of a resolute and firm character, as Mr. MacCarthy himself, though not of a weak disposition, would have testified. There could be no doubt of the fact that she really ruled the "Cross;" and as it prospered well enough under her more or less delicate hands, and the number of its guests increased week by week, and the amount of its income showed the same satisfactory results, Mr. MacCarthy submitted willingly enough to the powers that were, and contented himself with directing, on his own account, his activity and ingenuity to some little trade of a different character, of which we shall have more to say in the course of our narrative.

Polly was a model of a saucy barmaid—a buxom girl, with a pair of eyes not less bewitching than those of her mistress, either in fire of expression or darkness of hue. In all other respects she even surpassed her mistress by her youthful freshness. But Mrs. MacCarthy was by no means jealous. It was this very sprightliness in Polly that attracted more guests to the house every evening, and it had indeed been her chief reason for engaging the handsome waitress.

On the occasion to which we now refer the evening was not far advanced. Not many guests had assembled. At two of the tables parties were seated—the men from the *Boreas*, five Germans, and three Frenchmen, the first drinking ale, the others claret. Polly had just placed another bottle of the French wine upon the table, when Jean seized her by the hand which she had

stretched out for the purpose of removing the empt bottle. She looked at him with a smile, and gentl tried to free herself.

"Polly," said the young and handsome sailor, placin his left hand upon her shoulder, "you are very pro voking again this evening. Why, you won't so much as look at one. Have I offended you?"

He spoke English with some difficulty. However, it did not seem to sound disagreeably to the girl, who shook her head with a smile.

"You haven't offended me at all, Mr. Jean, but you must let me go; for missis is already looking at me pretty sharply, and I have lots of work to do. Here are other customers coming!"

"Polly, I have something to say to you," Jean continued, in a hurried whisper. "Will you come out with me presently for a few seconds?"

"I do not know about that," said the girl, in suppressed tones, at the same time freeing herself from his grasp. Her eyes gave the required answer, and said "yes" plainly enough; whereupon Jean emptied his glass at one draught.

"Halloo—very busy again," said the first of the group of English sailors who now entered the room. "Why, here's the whole company assembled, and Jean has his hands full, I perceive. Good evening, Mr. MacCarthy; good evening, missis—young and blooming like a rose, but not like the last—eh, missis? What will you have, Jack? and you, Bob? Jim's taste I know—like me he sticks to brandy-and-water."

The four men stepped up to the bar, and had a glass then they sat down round a long table which stood close at hand. The others immediately joined them with their bottles and glasses, and a conversation commenced, which was carried on in an undertone.

In addition to the men from the *Boreas*, there were at that moment but four other guests in the room; and the innkeeper, after having opened two bottles of stout for the new arrivals, sat down with them,

did not say a word: something seemed to weigh upon his mind.

"Who was it wanted to speak to us to-day?" asked Jack at last, turning towards their host. "Let him come at once, and tell his tale. I, for one, cannot remain here very long to-night—and we are pretty nearly all of us together now."

"Hem!" coughed Mr. MacCarthy, casting around the room an apparently indifferent look, which, however, rested sharply on the other guests. As if satisfied by this scrutiny, he bent a little forward, and said, in an undertone, looking steadfastly at all present,—

"Should you like to stay on board ship, if you could find anything to do in town? That is to say—for you must not misunderstand me—I don't know what kind of a contract you may have with your skipper, and it's not my business either. But if nothing detains you, I know a place where you may comfortably make from six to eight shillings a-day; and to get that sum on board ship you must work like a horse for a whole week. Do any of you understand sail-making?"

"Four of us have regularly learned the business of sail-making," said the German, "and the others, all of them, understand enough of it to do little jobs, and all such work."

"That would be of use. A deal of money may be earned just now by tent-making," continued the innkeeper, musing. "Have you any money due to you, or are there any amongst you who might begin on their own account?"

"I have a good round sum here," Jean replied, quickly, "and am well enough disposed to settle here for ever, if only——"

He stopped, and cast an inquiring glance at Polly, who replied with a friendly smile. This seemed to confirm him in his intention. "What do you wish us to do?—what can you do for us?—what can you offer? Out with it—don't keep us waiting so long."

"I?" answered the innkeeper, with astonishment depicted upon his features, and at the same time giving Jean a sign not to speak so loud. "I? What do I want with you? Why, I don't want anything with you. What could I? I only ask you for your own profit, and have told you already I do not know, and cannot know, how you stand on board your ship. This much is certain—this is the time for a young man to make his fortune in Sydney; and if a fellow does not take such opportunity by the forelock, why, that is a fellow's own fault, and he has nobody else to blame for it."

"That's all very fine, but how are we to get away from the ship?" asked one of the Englishmen; "and after we have cut and run—for that, after all, would be the best plan—where are we to hide? We must first find a hiding-place on shore, and a safe one, I say, otherwise the cock won't fight at all. We all have money owing to us by the captain, but it's evident we shall not get any just now. Everybody knows that. The only things we can bring away are our clothes. Who is to take us in, then, and who will give us credit until we can earn something?"

"Oh, our clothes and things are worth that much," interposed another; "they can be left in pawn, and we can eat and drink for a few days, until the ship has sailed; and at the high wages here, we shall soon be able to clear off our debts."

"I will tell you something," MacCarthy replied, leaning across the table. "If you will follow my advice, you will——"

At this moment, a glass fell to the ground at the other end of the bar, breaking into a hundred pieces with a loud crash. Mrs. MacCarthy somehow or other let it drop. Mr. MacCarthy was by no means startled by so common an occurrence, and, without so much as turning his head to look in that direction, continued slowly and composedly,

"You will paint your ship a light colour, and not

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

Polly? Will you—will you, in short, become my wife?" The last words were uttered in an undertone. When he had concluded, Jean stooped down and pressed a kiss upon the girl's forehead.

"Don't—don't!" answered the girl, endeavouring to free herself from his embrace. She was not, however, quite in earnest, for Jean experienced no difficulty in keeping her close to his side. Again he put the question more pressingly.

"Do answer me, Polly! On your reply it depends whether I remain in Sydney—in Australia, or go away. If you say 'yes,' then you shall see how I can work; and when we have made some money, then we will return to beautiful France. You like Provence, don't you?—You do not say a single word, and yet I know that you do not feel happy in your present circumstances—you cannot feel so."

"Happy!" said the girl, shaking her head with a kind of sorrowful smile. "Why, it is a horrible kind of life here, to be compelled to witness this wild drinking and debauchery. What is a poor girl to do? It is, after all, an honest livelihood."

"And do you say yes, Polly—do you?" asked the young man more earnestly, as he kissed her rosy lips, and this time she hardly resisted. "Do you say yes?"

"Come and live on shore first," replied Polly, in a whisper; and before Jean was aware what she was doing, she had slipped from under his hands, and re-entered the house. With sparkling eyes Jean followed her, and was not by any means angry that, at his entrance, Polly avoided his searching look, and eagerly engaged in her work, while Mrs. MacCarthy was scolding her for running out of doors, while her help was so much wanted in the room.

Whilst Jean had this decisive conversation outside, matters in the room had also taken a somewhat different aspect. The two policemen, whom Mrs. MacCarthy knew as well as her husband did, had left, thoroughly convinced of the impossibility of getting at

the real state of the case. On the other h
visitor made his appearance, in the person of t
of the *Pelican*. This individual had formerl
board the same ship with one of the Englis
He was induced to return to town once more be
ing, in search of several articles for the ship t
to set sail on the following morning. He knew
the men from the *Boreas* were to meet that e
and seemed to have directed his steps thither in
to see them. When Jean entered, they were
engaged in a conversation, the subject of which se
to interest them all very much.

"And I tell you distinctly," said the steward
reply to some doubt raised by William; "I tell
distinctly, that I heard this morning with my own e
and from your captain's own mouth, that to-morr
morning, at six o'clock, he means to lay out into t
bay, by aid of the little tug steamer, *The Brother*
That same little steamer will then bring out all th
horses that remain unshipped; and he means, if pos-
sible, to put to sea on Monday afternoon. Your cap-
tain has been on board our ship twice to-day. The
first time he was extremely confidential; but when he
returned, he wasn't quite so easy, and he wished above
all things to get you secured. You see, then, that
you have not any time to lose."

"The deuce!" said one of the Englishmen; "that
would be a very queer joke. That's the reason, then,
why the old fox refused to let us have our money
until to-morrow. So he thought he would have us all
on board safe enough, and could perhaps even give us
in charge of a few of the police scoundrels."

"And do you know a safe hiding-place for us, Mac-
Carthy," asked one of the Frenchmen, "where we
could lie snug? I, for one, shall come on shore to-night,
with bag and baggage."

MacCarthy went away, as if he had not heard the
question. His wife, who had glided up to the table,
said half aloud, and in French,

"Let him go; he must not act in that matter. Should it come before the courts, he may be called upon to give evidence on his oath, and if he knows nothing, he may do so with a good conscience. I will take the matter in hand. You have only to bring your clothes and things here to-night—you know the back-door, if the front one should be closed—and by break of day I will get you out of the town. There happens to be a workman here just now, from my brother-in-law's, on the other side of the bay, and with him you may fell trees, or make sails, or do what you like, until the ship is gone."

"What the deuce are you gabbling there?" cried William. "Speak English, that a fellow may understand what you are saying."

"Be quiet; Jean will translate by and bye," replied Mrs. MacCarthy, in an undertone; "there are other ears here, and it will not be advisable to let them know what we have been talking about." With these words she turned away from the table, and stepped behind the bar. The men from the *Boreas* whispered to each other for a little while, and then left the inn together. Jean had not been able to seize an opportunity for holding additional communication of a confidential nature with Polly.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FLIGHT.

THE *Boreas*, with cargo on board, was lying close to the Patent Slip, a kind of dock into which ships are drawn by machinery until they lie entirely high and dry, and can be examined and repaired down to the keel. Having been let down from this machinery, the *Boreas* remained close to it. Her rigging had been put in order; ballast, water, stores, and horses had

been taken on board, and she lay quietly at anchor. Two strong hawsers kept the vessel to the shore, and from one side of the deck a man might have glided directly on to the wharf.

The crew of the *Boreas* returned on board in groups, two or three at a time. The carpenter, an Englishman, was on watch when they arrived; and the men went to the forecastle in order to make the best use of their time, and pack their things together. Of course it was essential not to allow the carpenter to gain any idea of what was going on. The mate was generally asleep at that time. One of the men remained on deck conversing with the carpenter, in order to give a signal by letting something heavy drop should any of the officers show signs of going down.

Jean was on deck at the time, and kept pacing up and down. He related stories about Provence to the carpenter in order to draw off his attention, and in this he succeeded so far as to procure time enough for his comrades to get their things ready. The only remaining difficulty was to bring the bundles on deck, and then to steal away unperceived with them on shore. The slightest mishap in the scheme would necessarily place them in a very disagreeable position indeed, since the wharf at which they lay was but a short distance from Sussex-street, and a great number of constables were always to be found walking up and down in that neighbourhood. The least noise would be sufficient to arouse the attention of one of them, and he might easily call twenty more to his assistance.

Their safest means of escape would have been to secure one of the boats moored at hand, and in this to make for the opposite shore of the bay. At any rate, no other plan afforded equal safety for carrying away their kit. In that direction there were but few houses, and certainly no policemen. The runaways only wanted to go up as far as George-street, when they would have come round the bay, and might easily, and without creating suspicion, have conveyed all

their baggage across George-street into the Golden Cross.

It was not midnight when the second mate came from ashore on board and went straight to the forecastle. Jean was standing with the carpenter, near the hatchway, and when he saw the dark figure coming directly towards him, he kicked his foot, as if by chance, against some iron implement. Then, as if vexed at the accident, he took it and threw it violently out of his way; and it fell upon the deck with a loud noise.

"The deuce take that thing," he cried, putting his hand to his foot and rubbing it. "It's no joke to knock one's limbs against such stupid things—horridly painful work!"

"What noise is that over there?" cried the mate, stepping forward. "Who is there? Jean, have you only just come from shore?"

"Oh, no! I have been walking up and down with the carpenter here for nearly an hour."

"Chips," exclaimed the mate—Chips is the general name for the carpenter on board many English ships —"Chips," he said, taking the carpenter a little aside, "keep your eyes open. There was a light in the forecastle just now, when I came on deck; now it is out. Have the men been on board long?"

"The last lot came about half an hour ago," said the carpenter. "What is your time? it must soon be midnight."

"It's five minutes to twelve," answered the mate. "I will go and call up the steward, now. At two o'clock you will have to relieve him again. If you see anything that looks the least suspicious, call me.—You may go to bed, Jean," he continued in a louder tone to the sailor, who stood a little aside; "it will soon be twelve o'clock."

"Am I to call Bill?" asked Jean, who remained standing. "I believe Bill will have the next watch."

"No, it is not necessary," was the reply. "You may all turn in."

"Here's a nice affair," thought Jean, as he went to make his comrades acquainted with the new order. He stood listening as soon as he got below, in order to ascertain whether anybody was following him. When satisfied that all was safe on that score, he said in an undertone,

"Hallos, there! are you asleep?"

It was pitch dark, and Jean could not see his hand before his eyes.

"Is that Jean?" asked one of the men, cautiously.

"Yes," was his equally cautious reply. "All right!"

"All right!" replied Bill; "my watch will soon begin."

"Don't trouble yourself about it," said Jean. "The rascals must have smelt a rat; we are not wanted to watch to-night. It seems the mate and the carpenter, and perhaps the steward, will take the watch themselves. The captain is on board too—at least, so the carpenter told me."

"The deuce!" cried the cook, who was altogether in league with the sailors. With a spring he rushed to Jean's side, and continued, "Now we are done for."

"Not quite," said Jean, after casting another inquiring look upwards. "First, we must wait and see who is to have the next watch, and then we must consult what is to be done. I wish I had my things ready. I must not strike a light at any rate, or we shall have them pouncing upon us directly."

"Here, take this little lantern," said Bill, handing one to him. "You can put it in your chest, and the light will not show."

Jean groped his way towards him, and went into the furthest corner to light the candle. He placed the little lantern in his chest, which luckily stood at the extreme end, and could not easily be seen from above. He was not very long putting his things together. At half-past twelve everything was ready, the candle again snuffed out, and "Bob" sent on deck to reconnoitre. In ten minutes, he returned with the news that the

steward was keeping watch. Hardly had the messenger reported this, when the carpenter descended, undressed, and went into his berth. It was evident that nothing further could be done. Jean resolved to wait till day-break, and then, if no other chance appeared, to leave all his things behind, and to go on shore with nothing but his money; or, if that should not be possible, to swim across the bay to the opposite shore.

Until two o'clock, the sailors all lay in painful expectation. None slept, nor did any dare to speak a single word; for they listened in vain to hear the carpenter snore, or give any other sign of his usual sound sleep. What was to be done? They calculated that it was near day-break when the steward came down. He stood still for a few minutes, listening; from all the berths he heard the deep, regular sounds of profound sleep. Satisfied and in good spirits, he nodded his head, groped his way cautiously, in order not to disturb any of the sleepers, to the carpenter's berth, and called him up.

"Who is there?" cried the carpenter, starting up from a snooze. "Stop them—stop—there they run."

"Hold your tongue, man," replied the steward, in a whisper, shaking him with all his might. "Why, you will wake up the whole crew. It is two o'clock—get up. I am as tired as a dog."

"Ay, ay," said the carpenter, only half awake. "I am coming directly. Where are they? Oh, yes—I see—it's all right—I know—what is the matter?"

"It's all right; but do get up, and don't fall asleep again," replied the steward, going out and knocking his knee in the dark on a chest that stood in the way. "I must have chipped off a large piece of flesh there. I wish that the fellows——" He muttered the sentence in a few words of grumbling dissatisfaction as he climbed slowly up to the deck, and disappeared.

The carpenter lay for about ten minutes more, then turned out moaning and groaning, groped about for his thick woollen jacket, which he at last found and

put on; then he took his cap from the peg above his head, and followed the steward on deck.

He had hardly appeared above the ladder when Jean also leapt out of his berth, followed him stealthily, and listened to make out where the carpenter had gone. Then he made his way back to his comrades.

"What's to be done now?" he said, in an undertone. "In a few hours we shall have broad daylight; and the greatest blessing, as the case stands, is, that we have that fellow at least out of sight. I really could not have supposed that he slept as soundly as a bear, or we might by this time have been in safety all of us. Who can give us a bit of advice?"

"I don't know whether my advice is the best that's to be had," replied one of the Germans, "but I can propose something at all events. I will, as soon as one can get fairly out of this hole, let myself down the ship's side, and fetch one of those little boats that are lying close at hand. Then you must manage to let down our bundles, one after the other, without the carpenter's being aware of it, and I will row them over to the shore yonder, where I shall wait for you until you come."

"Had we not better try, in the first instance, to get the things on shore?" asked Robert, one of the English sailors. "That would be considerably less trouble than sending them across the bay, as we shall afterwards have to walk round all the blessed way. Why, it will be broad daylight before we get there."

"We cannot land our things here," interposed the German, quickly. "If they are on the watch, as I don't in the least doubt, they'll be sure not to have forgotten to call in the help of all the police constables in Sussex-street, and these fellows will likely enough arrest everybody coming across with bundles or packages of any kind. This, at least, seems the most likely, and we must not expose ourselves. Besides, the carpenter could not help seeing any one who might be walking towards the houses. The road is open on all sides; and he would set up a nice noise."

"How, then, are we to get away at all?" asked Jean, again.

"If we once get the traps in safety, the rest will come easily," replied the German. "All clear on deck?"

"Yes, for the moment; but the carpenter will be down again in a minute. It is the proper time for us to try it on."

Without saying another word, the German, like a serpent, glided up the ladder, over the side, and down the anchor-chain into the water. Jean listened attentively, but he could hear no splash, so cautiously had the other managed the affair.

The carpenter was pacing up and down the deck. The men below sat anxiously waiting for a signal that the boat was lying ready. They had packed up all the things they could by any possibility require, and had stowed away the rest in the ordinary places. William was the first to take out his bundle; and while the carpenter on watch was going forward, he got out in safety. Jean then thought it necessary to prevent others from issuing forth before they were certain that the boat was alongside. If the carpenter should by any chance extend his walk a few paces nearer to them, they were almost certain of being discovered. The expected signal was given, almost quicker than they might reasonably have expected. A slight tap was heard at the side of the ship, and Jean listened still more attentively, and kept his eye upon the movements of the watchman.

"Where is the carpenter now?" asked William from below. "Can you see him, Jean?"

"No," replied the latter, in a whisper, "I can't get a glimpse of him. I think I had better run across the deck to try and find out."

"Do no such thing," interposed the other. "You would only excite suspicion. He is most likely on the look-out on the quarter-deck. Come quickly, and take your things."

"We shall arrange that differently," replied Jean.

"One of us must creep out, and hand down the things as we give them out. Bob can conceal himself, and I can then hand everything to him, and at the same time survey the whole deck. Afterwards not a word must be spoken. Who has been lighting a candle down there?"

Jean quickly leapt down to put a stop to this imprudence, which might easily lead to their being discovered. If the man on watch should perceive a light in the forecastle, he would have known at once that something extraordinary was going on.

"Put out your candle," he cried in an angry, yet smothered, tone of voice. "Do you intend to spoil the whole affair? Who has been playing this foolish trick?"

"I did it," answered James, an Irishman, ill-humouredly; "and I had mighty good reason for it, too. I dropt half-a-crown into the chest, and I dare say most of yez would light a candle if ye'd lost all yer fortune. Barrin' that half-crown, I have but three shillings in the world, and they're owing to me."

As the Irishman uttered these words, Jean heard some one coming down. The German at the same time made the signal agreed upon. James found his half-crown, put it in his pocket, and opened his lantern to blow out the light.

"Holloa," suddenly cried a gruff voice that seemed to issue from the middle of the group, so unexpectedly that all of them shrank back as if struck by an electric shock. "Holloa, what's that?"

James, quite by chance, turned the full glare of his lantern on the face of the speaker. It was the carpenter, who gazed around, in stupid astonishment, upon the group ready to start.

"This is a pretty piece of business," he exclaimed. "What on earth——"

He had not time to finish the sentence. William and Jean, who stood behind, whispered for an instant, *and the very next* moment the carpenter felt himself

in the iron grasp of two muscular arms. He was held in such a manner that his hands were altogether powerless. At the same time another of the gang placed a gag in his mouth. Jim, almost as much astonished as the victim himself at this magical change of the situation, let the rays of his light fall right and left, and perceived that Jean and Bill were occupied with their victim. In a second, however, he closed his lantern again, and everything was once more buried in profound darkness.

They now heard for the third time the signal given still louder, and with seeming impatience.

"That fellow will knock in the ship's sides," said Jim, laughing, in his droll way, as if speaking to himself. "Shall we send him the carpenter down, just by way of comforting him?"

"Look alive, and let us lose no more time," cried Jean to the others. "Bill, take the things on deck, and then away to the boat."

The carpenter resisted with all his might. It was in vain that he tried to free himself, or at least to get the gag out of his mouth that he might give the alarm. Jean held him with the force of a giant, and every attempt of the kind was fruitless.

"Hand me a rope's end, one of you," said the latter, when he had succeeded in quieting the carpenter a moment. "Here, Bob, tie his hands together; Jim, show a light again. Are they tied tight?"

"He won't get them free again by himself," said Bob, with a laugh. "Shall I secure his feet?"

"It will be as well. Now wind this rope round the post here—tighter—that will do; and look well to his mouth." With these words he took off his own necktie, and bound it round the poor carpenter's mouth, who stood fixed to the post, with nothing but his nose free for breathing. "Let us be off," he cried, as he finished these precautions. "Are the things ready on deck?"

"*This is the last*," cried Bob, handing up two *bundles*.

"Well, now, good-bye, *Boreas*, and good-bye, carpenter." He sprang up the hatchway, and followed by the others made his way to the boat. Jean was the last to leave the ship. Nothing was stirring on deck; up in Sussex-street he heard the police-constables call the hour; it was just three o'clock. Around the bay the cocks here and there began to crow, and from the furnaces the red flames that had been burning all night still ascended into the cold gray morning sky.

All Sydney was still asleep, and the bay so quiet that the stars shining down upon it were reflected almost as brightly as they shone. Not a breath of air ruffled the surface of the water; and the regular footsteps of the watch on board an English bark, lying there, might be heard with perfect distinctness.

Jean, as soon as he had ascertained that nobody on board their ship had the slightest suspicion respecting what had happened, followed his comrades into the boat. The next moment they started, paddling by means of two small pieces of wood that did duty for the boat's oars, which had been removed. They went straight across the bay towards the opposite shore. On reaching the land they made the boat fast that its owner might find it again in the morning; took their bundles on their shoulders—and a moment after had disappeared amongst the adjoining houses. Here they separated, taking different roads to their common meeting-place, thus hoping to avoid detection.

Only one of the crew had remained on board the *Boreas*. This man was a German. He had kept quiet in his berth without being missed, and when his absence was discovered it was too late. On perceiving that his comrades had left the ship, he did not trouble himself about setting the carpenter at liberty, but, preserving a perfect neutrality, turned round upon his other side, and was very soon asleep again.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE captain of the *Boreas* was taking his ease in his berth. He had indulged freely in the pleasures of the table the previous evening, and his head was still suffering from the effects of the numerous glasses of grog that he had poured down his throat. He dreamt—but never mind his dreams, we cannot afford to let him sleep any longer.

The day commenced in the far east. The clear light penetrated into the cabin. The captain kept murmuring something about "half-and-half." He liked this mixture of ale and porter, and felt rather thirsty after his indulgence on the previous evening. He moaned once or twice, and turned himself round.

The steward had, meanwhile, also turned out. Nobody had aroused him; but he had been induced to get up by that sort of half-conscious feeling that sometimes disturbs our rest without any apparent cause. From the deepest sleep people often wake suddenly, if they are only the previous evening firmly resolved to get up at a certain hour.

This is a feeling which must be closely connected with our conscience; for it serves, though in an humble sphere, for the purpose. Perhaps it is the very power of conscience which economic nature appoints to perform this office also. Who amongst us has penetrated sufficiently into the innermost recesses of his own mind, to be able to obtain even the faintest idea of what he himself will think or feel at the very next minute? Not one.

Vain is it to attempt to concentrate all the power of the mind on one single point. The same unknown power existing within directs the current of man's

thought, quite independent of his will, whithersoever it listeth. But to resume: I was speaking of the steward, who started up from his couch in a sudden fright.

If drowsy fumes still oppressed his brains, yet the blow on his forehead, caused by knocking it against the beam over his head, speedily aroused him. In a moment he perceived that the broad daylight was streaming into his cabin; and at four o'clock it was once more his watch upon deck.

The thought flashed across his mind, why did not the carpenter call him? Without even putting on his jacket, or seizing the cap beside him, he ran upon deck. Everything was quiet and still; his heart beat like a smith's hammer, for he thought of the terrible consequences that would ensue to himself if the crew had managed to escape.

His worst suspicions were soon confirmed; and the poor carpenter was really in the most dismal position in the world. When he untied the neckcloth bound across his face, and took the gag from his mouth, it was as if he had taken the cork from a bottle of porter. As from the bottle the white foam, so from the mouth of the carpenter rushed a volley of curses, kept down and stifled for many weary hours.

Aroused by the noise, the German, too, awoke, and looked forth from his berth. The others at once fell upon him, asking what had become of the crew, and where they had taken refuge. He, however, knew nothing; he had not heard anybody go away, and nothing had been said to him concerning the designs of the runaways. He had come late on board, and being very tired, had fallen asleep, and was for the first time awakened by the volley of oaths poured forth by the carpenter.

Not the smallest scrap of information was to be got out of him; and the steward was under the disagreeable necessity of informing the captain of what had happened, in order that he might at once adopt the neces-

sary measures. He went down into the cabin, put on his jacket, combed his hair, and stepped into the captain's cabin.

"Captain Oilytt," he said, taking him by the arm, and shaking him gently.

"Brandy—hot," replied the captain. "No more of that ale—it burns like fire."

"Captain Oilytt," repeated the steward. Had he been a magician he would have made the captain sleep on for a few thousand years, and then have aroused him in some remote grotto by the wand of a beautiful enchanted princess. The steward shook him again, and with greater force than before.

"Seven shillings and sixpence," was the obstinate sleeper's reply, referring most likely to some tavern score he had been paying on the previous night. "Heavens!" he added, with a deep sigh.

"Well now, he calls on heaven, when he does not know himself what he is saying," observed the steward to himself; "and afterwards, when he wakes and comes to his senses, he will be sure to curse like any Pagan. If the cursing was all! I must really call him again."

This time the deep sleep gave way before the energetic attempts of the steward; and the captain, opening his eyes, started up in his bed.

"What is up now?" he cried, angrily. "Can a man not be allowed to sleep quietly till day, that you come bawling in the middle of the night in this fashion? Well, what's up?—are you going to speak?"

The steward did not find an opportunity of interposing a word; but he now took his chance to reveal at once the whole extent of the disaster.

"Captain Oilytt, all the crew have run away—the cook and the rest of them. Nobody has remained on board but the carpenter and one of the Germans, Hans."

With one bound the captain was out of his bed, and while hastily dressing, he poured forth a deluge of

curses. There could be no doubt, in his mind, that the fault lay solely with the carpenter and the steward; and the German was to be forced into a confession. The captain hastened to him, but he remained quite unshaken in his former statement, that he knew absolutely nothing of the affair. No threatening or promising of any advantages was of the slightest avail. He had been asleep all the night, from the time when he came on board until the moment when the steward set the carpenter free. On a former occasion, he admitted, there had been some talk of running away; but as he had at once firmly declared that he would not join in any such proceeding, they had evidently avoided speaking to him again on the subject.

The captain foamed with anger. "That comes," he cried, "that comes from my having engaged those foreigners. If I'd had Englishmen, no such thing could have happened. But wait, only wait, you wretches—I will be even with you yet. Let me only get hold of you again, you shall repent! And you, steward, you deserve a good round dozen, more than all the rest, you blockhead, you!"

Having said this, he shot like an arrow down into his cabin, dressed and went ashore, in order to give an account of his loss to the people at the water-police office, and to offer a reward for the capture of his fugitives.

He had scarcely got out of sight, and the steward had not even recovered from the effects of his master's ire, when the first mate entered, and poured forth reproaches upon him.

"You good-for-nothing!" he cried; "you are the only person who is to blame for the whole affair. Why did you not keep your eyes open, eh? What the deuce have you to do else? What are you good for?"

After this eruption of his feelings he went upstairs, and kept pacing the quarter-deck for a good hour. The steward meanwhile began to wash the tables in the

ıs. He had not finished the first table, when the ıd mate also made his appearance.

Why, you are the most useless article on board the ". he said, looking at the steward as if he would to eat him up, skin, bones, and all, and without er and salt, too. As if he could not bear to enter discussion on the question, or to hear even an er from the steward, he slammed the door again, disappeared on deck. He had been on shore half ıight, and had not returned till after midnight.

ıe steward, putting his hands to his forehead, sat ı at the table, shook his head, and muttered to elf,

Well, things are growing clear. It is I, then, who o blame. I am the sole cause of their escape. I see! had not slept during my two hours when the rs had the watch, the thing could never have hap-d. This will be a pleasant voyage!—that it will, ed! And I begin to think that it will be the very thing I can do to run away too. Then I wonder would be the cause of that! I again, of course. ıe chance they have of catching them. All they ı of them, I'll undertake to swallow them all in mouthful." With this savage decision he got up, continued his work.

CHAPTER VI.

SYDNEY IN THE DARK.

HOLE week passed, and still the *Boreas* lay at her berth near the wharf. The captain had not found of his men, in spite of the large reward promised. ourse, the vessel could not easily go to sea with man on board, and other sailors were not to be had ar for love or money. The captain, by illtreat-of his men, had such a bad name in Sydney, that

nobody would sail with him, and the gold mania had raised the price of labour.

In the meantime, the captain was obliged to take workmen on board, and to pay them very high wages. This went from the pockets of the runaways,—that is to say, from the money that was owing to them, and which they might have claimed had they been caught.

The water police, meanwhile, had been, or at least reported that they had been, extremely diligent in their efforts to find and arrest the men; but without any result. Only one pound sterling had been offered per head; and it was not to be expected that these guardians of the law would consider that sufficient, when it was evident a little hesitation would raise it much higher. The captain placed his greatest hopes on Saturday evening, when sailors in Sydney—as well as other people in other places—are less upon their guard. Then sailors in the position of our fugitives would be very apt to neglect their usual caution, in avoiding the public street, or such houses where they might be easily captured.

The case of the *Boreas* was not an isolated one. The crews of several other ships had also deserted, and all the water police were to be on the alert that evening. The two mates of the *Boreas*, and those of two other vessels, had moreover volunteered to go, each with a policeman, in order to point out the fugitives, and eventually to assist in their capture.

At seven o'clock, this force put themselves in motion, and soon dispersed, in order to be present at once in several districts of the town. A place of meeting was agreed upon. Midnight was the hour named, when notes were to be compared. Until one o'clock in the morning, the streets are always busy.

The first mate of the *Boreas*, the second mate of another English bark, and a policeman, agreed to survey the upper portion of the town—namely, George-street, Pitt-street, and the neighbourhood; though it was hardly likely that any of the runaways would be

found in Gerge-street, the principal thoroughfare of the town. They would hardly dare to enter this part of Sydney, which was always crowded with people, and where detection would be almost certain. In spite of this, the three men went up George-street and turned to the right, across Liverpool-street into Pitt-street, determined to visit, above all places, the Golden Cross, which they had heard had formerly been the chief place of resort for the men of the *Boreas*.

It was too early in the evening to hope to find many guests in the inns and public-houses. Most people kept walking about in the neighbourhood of the market-place, and in the market-halls, enjoying the beautiful moonlight night. However, there were from ten to twelve men assembled, most of them sailors; and in one of the little boxes the merriment was of rather a boisterous character. The mate of the *Boreas* cast a rapid but inquiring glance at the guests. He even stepped into the little "private bar," little dismayed by the rather cross "What do you want?" with which he was received. But he could not discover any face that was known to him. Mr. and Mrs. MacCarthy, on their part, exchanged knowing glances, and the lady turned with the utmost politeness to the new comers, asking what they wanted to drink. They asked for a bottle of porter and three glasses, and sat down at one of the tables.

Polly went to and fro, and seemed to be on very good terms with the policeman, a young, tall, handsome man. When Mr. MacCarthy had placed the second bottle on the table, the young man from the water police stood up and went out—he was followed in a few minutes by Polly—they both stood in the open doorway.

"Polly," said the policeman, lifting up her chin with his right forefinger, "where are the men from the *Boreas* whom you have hidden?"

"'Whom you have hidden?' said the girl, quickly and pertly, pushing his hand away from her chin;

"'whom you have hidden?' What have I to do with the men of the *Bore-ass*, or any other *ass* you may have to deal with. If you have nothing else to tell me, Mr. Greenhorn, you may be so kind as to let me alone for the future." Having said these words, she turned away as if about to re-enter the inn. But Charles—this was the name of the young man—took her by the hand, saying, in a flattering tone of voice, "Don't be foolish, Polly—you understand what I mean—and I know well enough that you personally have nothing to do with the affair, though I have heard rumours about a young Frenchman, who——"

"Charles," said the girl, now seriously angry, "you seem to make a point of vexing me to-night—and I won't answer another word."

"As for that, dear," said the young man, still holding the hand of the girl, "why you have not yet answered a single word. But I know you are a sensible girl—you have already given me so many proofs of it. Come let us talk reasonably to each other. Next week, when the captain of the *Boreas* cannot stay here any longer, a large reward will be offered for the capture of his men. If you will, then, earn the half of it, you have only to try and get me some little information about the matter from Mr. and Mrs. MacCarthy."

"Why, you don't think," interrupted the girl, "that Mr. and Mrs. MacCarthy would give shelter in their house to runaway sailors?"

"Dear me, no," said Charles, with a hearty laugh, "certainly not; they are both much too prudent. They know to what they would expose themselves. There are fifty pounds penalty on it. No, they will not do that; yet they may have many a——but the deuce take it, you are sensible enough, and I need not give you any further explanation about it."

The girl looked down for a moment, then said in an undertone, "How much will the reward be?"

"*How much?* Well, at any rate not under four *pounds sterling* per man, but most likely six; and how

many are there of them? Let me see,—there are four, seven, nine—are there not?"

The girl looked up at him, shaking her head slily. That trap had been laid a little too clumsily. Charles might have felt that himself, for he blushed up to his ears, but said immediately afterwards, laughing, "I beg your pardon; I had forgotten altogether that you know nothing about it. Enough for the present. I do not myself care much about catching them to-night; and if they are near, they will do well to keep out of the streets and public-houses, or they might find themselves to-morrow in a place on which they will have hardly reckoned. Good-bye, then, Polly; be a good girl, and keep your eyes open."

He stepped back with her into the dark alley, took her a little nearer to himself, and——but it was really too dark, and we could see nothing more. A minute after, the tavern door opened; Charles stood in the door of the house, and Polly, coming apparently from the yard, stepped into the bar room.

When Charles entered the room again, the two mates had already paid their reckoning, and made themselves ready for a start. They went in the first instance to Rowson-street, where a kind of square garden forms one side of the road, and which is a chief place of resort for sailors. Though they met many sailors, and examined all attentively, yet they could not detect one of their own men. Once, indeed, a dark form glided past them which seemed not altogether unknown to the mate; but it disappeared quickly through a gate in the railing, and entered a house, the door of which was immediately closed. As it was not a public-house or boarding-house, the police would have had to take out a warrant before being allowed to search. Charles often remained behind, whispering here and there with a female standing in the shadow of some dingy house. He seemed to be familiar *with all the* nooks and corners of the whole *town.*

It was about nine o'clock when they returned to Pitt-street. Here, in the meanwhile, some change had taken place; and the street, before almost deserted, was now crowded with people, especially in the vicinity of the theatre. Opposite the theatre are some small dancing and drinking houses, to which there was a great rush. Our three wanderers followed the crowd and entered "Shakespeare's House." The bar was down stairs, and behind was a little room for those who wanted to drink a quiet glass of beer. Both apartments were almost empty of guests, and yet the house was known to have an uncommonly large custom. There were other rooms besides those mentioned. Immediately beside the bar, divided from it merely by a wall, and with a special entrance from the street, a staircase went to the first story, where the whole space was divided into two large rooms. One was a lofty saloon, at the further end of which appeared a full-length portrait of Shakespeare. The great poet stood erect, and regarded things below with an air of utter indifference. The painter flattered himself, no doubt, with having achieved a difficult task. His Shakespeare might indeed be recognised by the dress, and certain traditional outlines of his face. But the countenance was so utterly devoid of expression, that a jolly toper might have been tempted in the absence of the painter himself, to throw the first bottle he could lay hold of at his picture. Around the walls were scenes from the works of Shakespeare not exactly in the spirit in which the author would have conceived them. The Tempest, Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, and Falstaff, supplied the favourite themes; and on one of the pictures, a black figure, with a kind of Scotch cap on his head, and a skittle bowl in his hand, looked unmistakeably determined to knock down "all nine." He was intended for Hamlet.

The saloon was at that time nearly empty. At the *corner* on the left stood an old, much-used piano. *Before it was a* young man, who, with the utmost dis-

regard for his own and other people's feelings, hammered away at an old polka from beginning to end, and when he had done, began it over again. At his side stood a little boy with a fiddle, who evidently had the strongest desire of accompanying the other virtuoso, and would have done so, but that he could not follow him. At the beginning of the tune, he kept with his leader very well; but then the other went too quick, and he could never catch him. The sweat stood upon his brow, his eyes protruded from his forehead, his fingers went up and down the hard-worked cords in restless haste—but in vain. If the piano-beater had but waited for a second; nay, but half a second!—But no!—on he went, onward without rest, like the Wild Huntsman; and the poor violin player at last abandoned the pursuit in sheer despair.

Forms and divans were arranged round the walls. On one, just below the Shakespeare statue, reclined a young, pretty girl. She was dressed in a silk gown, and from beneath its folds her pretty little feet protruded. Her occupation, as one might expect, from her position under a portrait of Shakspeare, was purely spiritual. She was sipping a glass of brandy and water. Having finished this, she placed it in an easy way beside her on the ground. On the other divans and forms sat other girls and young men, several of the former very elegantly dressed, with nice bonnets and veils, and large shawls; others again, with simply plaited hair and cotton dresses. Nor was the difference of appearance in the visitors of the male sex less striking; types of all classes, from the comparatively elegantly dressed dandy down to the common sailor, stood and lounged about in the most motley groups. Another difference might have been observed—namely, that all the girls were young, whilst among the men there were some even of a ripe age. They put on a very youthful *grace and ease*, as they strolled about, or *sipped a glass of port* wine. Dancing had not com-

menced; the desperate trial of strength between the two musicians was but the prelude.

Our three friends did not find the objects of their search. Charles thought it might be better to return later, intending to proceed at once to the other public-houses of the neighbourhood. Before descending the staircase, they slipped for a moment into the room which looked towards the street. Three young girls were sitting at the middle window, looking at the theatre opposite. Others lounged about in different corners on divans; and some of these appeared to be asleep, whilst one of them stood at the table, in eager conversation, carried on in an undertone, with a young man, who was very elegantly dressed, and evidently belonged to the higher orders of society.

It was apparent that nothing was to be done; so the party went down stairs, turned to the right, and stepped into the next saloon, about three or four doors lower down the street. The shrill sounds of a violin, out of tune, greeted their ears on entering; and they were speedily enveloped in a thick cloud of tobacco-smoke, and the noisome fumes of brandy and water. They had all three passed through many much worse scenes, and they moved in this chaos as in their element. Indeed, that which was going on around them failed to produce any impression. The male guests consisted almost entirely of sailors belonging to the different ships in the bay, and the girls belonged to the lowest class. This den was situated farther back, and more away from the chief thoroughfare, and it was said that several of the men from the *Boreas* had been there since their desertion from their ship.

Charles called the bar-keeper aside, and spoke with him in a whisper for some minutes. It was probable that the men from the *Boreas* would not remain together at the same place; more especially as they belonged to different nations. There was consequently *some chance* of finding one or two of them. But the *landlord in this* den knew nothing. At least he shook

his head, and seemed inclined to break off the conversation in a rather abrupt manner. He was prevented from doing this by recognising the policeman, though the officer was not in uniform.

"I am quite sure that one or more of the gang have been here," said Charles, on returning to his comrades. "That man was quite taken aback, when I told him so positively, and was very eager to get away from me. He was evidently alarmed. Let us go away, and then return. We must step at once into the little room at the back before they get the least suspicion of our purpose."

Two doors lower down they came upon another of those establishments. Ten or twelve girls stood before the door quarrelling and scolding each other. From the other side of the street several constables were seen approaching; and as the girls did not anticipate a pleasant meeting with them, they retreated into the house, continuing there with unabated fury their quarrel about some trifling cause. They were most of them young, being from sixteen to eighteen years of age. Several had bruises and black eyes—the consequences of a former fight, perhaps of last Saturday evening—and many were smoking cigars. Of course everybody crowded round them in order to see the end of the quarrel, which was likely to turn into a general fight. All the sailors in the neighbourhood had collected near this spot.

"Now is our time," whispered Charles to his comrades; "take your posts at two opposite sides of the room, and examine the faces of those who enter. I will look after the men as they go out. If you see one of our crew, make a signal, and I will be at your side."

The row inside the house had, meanwhile, assumed a more serious character. The two Amazons of low life stood face to face with their arms on their hips puffing *away the smoke* of their manillas in thick *clouds. This was* a sign of very violent wrath, and

both the combatants evidently belonged to the least respectable portion of society.

"What are you doing here, you ugly thing, with your large eyes?" cried one of them, giving a more general turn to their amicable discussion. "What brings you here? You are always in other people's way, prying about and trying to get up rows."

"What am I doing here?" cried the other, throwing away her cigar, and tucking up the sleeves of her dress to be ready for the unavoidable fray. "I tell ye that's my affair, and if you don't think that a sufficient answer, I am ready to give you another—when and where you like."

"Go it, Nelly." "Go it, ye cripples." "Hurrah for Sally!" cried some of the male bystanders in wild glee. They had formed a circle around these two fair wranglers.

"Four of brandy—hot," cried at this moment the red-haired waiter, endeavouring to push his way into the room with a tray and four half-filled glasses. It would have been better for him had he brought cold brandy instead of hot; for some one in the crowd, by accident or design upset his tray, sending the whole contents in the most literal sense of the word over his unfortunate head and neck.

Sally's only reply to the challenge was an oath. In less than a minute she also threw her cigar into the crowd, and with all the eagerness of a prize-fighter attacked her opponent.

The shouting and shrieking had at that moment reached a climax. The room was as full of men as it could possibly be. They were packed close like oysters in a barrel, and they thronged around the two desperate Amazons.

The mate of the *Boreas*, who had posted himself close to the door in order to be ready in case of need, had been pushed back by the crowd much further *than he wished*. He would, moreover, have found it *difficult to get* out of the room until at least a portion

of the crowd had dispersed; and he consequently tried his utmost to get a place on a kind of scaffolding near the window. His object was not to witness the fight, for that interested him little, but to be enabled to scrutinize the faces of the new comers who kept pouring into the room.

At the door Charles had managed to keep his place, notwithstanding the pushing, and had only been forced a few steps inside. He kept looking at the different persons around. All at once he perceived the mate of the *Boreas* drawing himself up to his full height by standing on tip-toe. He was evidently searching for something in the crowd with the greatest eagerness. A face flitted before him, the features of which he could not trace, because they were obscured by the shadow of the lamp.

That face belonged to no other than our old acquaintance the sailor, William, vulgarly called Bill. With his hands in his pockets, and a cigar in his mouth, he was in the act of strolling past the house, when the noise inside attracted his attention. Almost without being aware of it, he had been pushed further and further into the room, and the struggle itself soon excited his curiosity, so that he really forgot all about the danger to which he was thus exposing his own worthy person. At last not with any view to his own safety, but quite by accident, he raised his eyes, and to his amazement met the glance of his own mate, by whom he was also immediately recognised. The mate, half from surprise, half from joy, uttered a loud cry. That cry Charles could not have heard, so loud was the noise; but the gesture which accompanied it did not escape his attention. Almost involuntarily his hand was directed to his coat-pocket to get ready the handcuffs. Bill, however, was much too cute not to see at a glance the danger to which he was exposed. He knew well enough that the mate was not the kind of man to come alone *into such a place.* The room had but one door, *and if that, as he* readily surmised, was watched and

secured, Bill certainly was in a trap. This was so much the more galling to him, from the fact that he had nothing but his extraordinary stupidity to blame for the dilemma in which he found himself. For the moment, however, nothing could be done. He could not even get his hands out of his coat-pocket, so much did the people press around him; for the fight was coming to a climax. Nelly had already received one black eye, and her opponent two, when the latter, amid the applause of the crowd, received a last and decisive blow, which hurled her on the ground like a corpse. Nelly was evidently a nervous girl; that is to say, she had excellent nerves and muscles.

William did not take the slightest interest in the fight. His own situation engrossed his attention, and he glanced eagerly around in order to take advantage of any chance that might present itself.

The mate, meanwhile, had kept up a kind of telegraphic communication with Charles, giving him to understand, or rather confirming him in the notion, that one of the men they were looking for was in the middle of the room. It was likewise not difficult for him to inform his partner that the object of their search wore a long beard. Bill was perfectly aware of the communications of this flying post. Although he would, of course, have been glad to know who his opponent was, yet he did not dare to look towards him. In fact, he would have been delighted to dive down into the sea of heads by which he was surrounded. It was, however, impossible for him to move an inch in any direction. He stood firmly wedged in. The mate cast a triumphant glance at the policeman; Bill was a safe prize for them.

At this very moment Nelly made a thrust at her opponent as she lay upon the ground. This was unfair, and those about her interfered to prevent the further chastisement of the vanquished. Thereby Bill obtained *at least space* enough to take his hands from his *pockets, and to* stoop down a little. At the same

time he made a desperate attack upon the legs of those who were pressing around him. Nothing was left for him then but to try to get away by force. He knew well enough that every moment would but increase his danger. Like a man swimming under water, he neither looked right nor left, but steered towards the door. It is true no favour was to be expected from the police-constables who might be outside. Yet he could not do otherwise, and must trust all to his good fortune.

As soon as the mate perceived the movements of his prey, of which he instantly guessed the true cause, he shouted out to the policeman. The latter could not hear anything distinctly in that pandemonium, so he endeavoured to make his meaning intelligible by signs and gestures. This, too, was rendered difficult by the circumstances in which he was placed. With one hand he had to hold fast to the cross-bar of the window to save himself from falling; and he could not stoop lest Charles should lose sight of him. Owing to these circumstances, he was forced to make the strangest movements and contortions; so that Charles looked at him quite in amazement, not being able to understand his proceedings, or to make out the precise meaning of his gestures.

This saved Bill. At that very moment, he glided serpent-like under the legs of his most dangerous adversary, who had the handcuffs ready, and the next moment was in King-street. Running along, he soon turned into one of the little alleys that were familiar to him, and made the best of his way to his hiding-place; firmly resolved not on any account to leave it again before he was certain that the ship had sailed. It was some time before the mate of the *Boreas* could be brought to believe that the sailor had escaped. Yet it was so; and he now sought to console himself by the belief that he might have been mistaken, and that the apparition had not really been the William of whom he was in search. *It was not* really probable that a man in *his position would* allow himself thus to be seen pub-

licly, and that he would dare to go out alone. Yet he allowed that a wonderful likeness existed between that man and the fugitive Bill.

From this place the three went back into Shakespeare House. Here the fun was now at its zenith. The theatre opposite had just disgorged its visitors. To the sounds of the piano and the violin, that by some wonderful process had been brought to go together, the fleet and sometimes even graceful pairs turned in quadrilles and country dances. All the divans were occupied, all the chairs and tables served for the repose of persons of both sexes. An incredible quantity of brandy and port wine was consumed. Shakespeare still kept looking on with the same insipid face, and Hamlet was engaged bowling on a green, as the "artist" had conceived them.

This second visit also proved fruitless. The search in another house was equally in vain, and they soon left Pitt-street, in order to go up a good way into George-street, where their attention was called to a particular house at the corner of King-street.

This was also a kind of tavern, at which theatrical exhibitions were given. They went up a few stairs into a large saloon, simply furnished with wooden forms and tables. In the background was a sort of small stage, in one corner of which a piano stood on three legs; it was being miserably belaboured by a young virtuoso in a threadbare full dress. This musical entertainment was not meant to serve as an accompaniment to dancing, but had a higher and more intellectual aim.

A man dressed in a theatrical costume appeared upon the stage. This attire was very much in keeping with the character of this place. It consisted of a tattered dress-coat, inexpressibles very much injured in the worst possible places, a crushed hat, and shoes trodden down. He sang a kind of comic song, perhaps "Vilikins and his Dinah," amid the most unbounded *applause of the* audience. This was composed one-half *of sailors* and working men of the lowest grade, the

other of girls who came to smoke their cigar, to drink their brandy, and to make acquaintances. They were all of bad character.

Here they were not more successful. Just as they were issuing from the door into the street again, a young fellow ran against the mate of the *Phœnix*, and was about making off with an excuse, when the other, on looking into his face, seized him.

"Holloa, Smith!" he exclaimed, "I am very glad to find you here. I have had a pretty good chase after you already. Mr. Charles, might I trouble you for your handcuffs."

Charles was soon ready. The poor sailor, who perceived that his career of freedom was about to be suddenly cut short, determined at least to make a last effort to escape. Relying, consequently, on the swiftness of his legs, he freed himself from the grasp of the mate, who suspected no attempt of the kind, and turned up King-street. The street was brilliantly lighted, and at the corners of King-street and Kent-street a number of policemen had congregated together. The alarm was given, the way was immediately stopped on both sides, and in five minutes more Smith was in the hands and wore the handcuffs of constable Charles, of the Sydney water-police force.

It had grown late meanwhile, and Charles went down to the station-house with his prisoner. His comrades went to the place of rendezvous, where they were to have further news from the officers of justice and from their own fellows about the success of the search.

Just before reaching the house in Pitt-street, which had been pointed out to them, between Druid-street and Bathurst-street, the two men came upon a little, low-built tavern. They heard a noise inside, and as the door stood open, they entered.

It was one of the common haunts of the lower class, and things seemed to have gone on rather quietly during that evening. A great number of dirty glasses

were ranged on the bar table. Under one of the tables lay a drunken human being, apparently by the dress a woman. On another table a man reclined his head, snoring heavily. Behind the bar stood the innkeeper. He seemed no stranger to the bottle, for he could not keep his little swollen eyes open, and actually slept standing.

The most hideous, but also the most interesting, group consisted of five women and girls. Two of them, according to appearances, were not more than twenty or twenty-one years old. They might have been younger, for their mode of life renders people old before their time. The others were past thirty, with disagreeable, dirty, swollen faces; and they were all intoxicated. They poured brandy undiluted down their parched throats. Laughing and crying, they uttered the rudest and most disgusting things. None of them, however, heard what was said.

Apart from the others stood one girl, apparently eighteen years of age. Her hair hung dishevelled about her temples. The paint had partly run down her face and stood in stripes and mottles, while her pale cheeks looked out from beneath. On her forehead and temples she bore the traces of a recent fight. Her dress hung loosely about her. In her left hand she held a glass half filled with brandy, of which she had already swallowed a large portion. With a voice melodious and rich, she sang one of those songs of her home that speak so much to the heart:—"Oh, no, we never mention her."

Nobody listened to her; the host was asleep; the other women were occupied with their drink; and the singer herself did not seem to pay the least attention to others. She had begun her song in a wild and spasmodic intonation; but as she went on, the scenes of a past and better life seemed to press upon her mind. Her voice grew more and more tender, and when she had come to the last words, "If he has loved as I *have loved,* he never can forget," she suddenly let her

glass fall, and it broke in a hundred pieces. Then she threw herself down on the nearest form and sobbed aloud.

"Ninepence for the glass, sixpence for the brandy," said the innkeeper, startled, though yet half asleep, "makes one shilling—sixpence. Who has done it?" he added, with a business-like consciousness, which by that time had returned to him. He kept winking from beneath his bristly eyebrows at the several inmates of his house.

The two men slammed the door in disgust as they went out, and soon after reached the place of rendezvous, where they found their comrades waiting for them.

One Frenchman belonging to the *Boreas* had been taken, one belonging to the *Phœnix*, and three more of a whaler which had been in harbour for some time, in an almost helpless condition for want of men. In vain had all the haunts been searched where, according to the information received, sailors were concealed.

The police force naturally concluded that there was not for the present much chance of finding the remainder of the men at the rate of reward offered. It was evident, they said, that those who had concealed them were unwilling to give information, unless they were paid for it. Money was required, and if the captains had none to spare, why, then, they might "just have a little patience." In a few days they hoped to get at the runaways; but for the moment nothing was to be done at the rate of reward offered. They knew well enough that delay would not suit the captains, who would thus have to sacrifice ten times the amount which they asked as a reward. Wages for workmen and the expense occasioned by loss of time soon run up. The captains, consequently, would be compelled to hold out higher inducements to secure the capture of their runaway sailors.

It was one o'clock ere the party reached their ships. The streets were quiet and deserted. A few policemen might *be seen slowly* pacing up and down, and the *echoes of their footsteps* broke the silence of the night.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT MONEY CAN DO.

For ten days after the evening referred to in the preceding chapter the *Boreas* was at anchor in the bay. She could not sail until her crew had been captured, and of this there did not appear to be the slightest chance. The captain could not procure fresh hands, as his deserters had spread his character all over the town. Moreover, a lawsuit in which he had been engaged with his cook, just after entering the harbour, and another with one of the French sailors, had both been decided against him; and being fully reported in the papers, had contributed not a little to prevent sailors anxious to take service from joining his ship.

At length his departure could not with safety be postponed. Twice had he taken in a supply of water for the voyage and fresh fodder for the horses he had on board. The wages of the workmen kept rising from day to day, and the result which the police anticipated was brought about—namely, a reward of six pounds per head was offered for the capture of the deserters. This was the signal for action. Something was to be made of the transaction, and Charles instantly understood where to apply for information.

It is time that I once more direct the attention of the reader to the principal personages of this tale,—the crew of the *Boreas*. On the morning when they so luckily effected their retreat, they met, as had been agreed, at the Golden Cross. The landlord awaited them, took possession of their bags, and locked them carefully up in a safe place. He then had the men conveyed across the bay by a young fellow whom he had kept all night for this especial purpose. Their kit, in case of accidents, indemnified the wily landlord

against any loss for a few days' board. By keeping them at a distance he guaranteed himself against any evil consequences in case their place of refuge should really be discovered.

If all went well—that is to say, if the ship sailed without the fugitives—the police would not molest them. Even if an especial order had been left for their punishment by the captain, they would, at the most, be placed in arrest for a short period, and afterwards be free to take work wherever they might think fit. For procuring work they might safely rely upon their lodging-keeper. It would be to his interest to get immediate payment for their board and lodging, receiving the first or the first and second month's wages, which it was usual to pay in advance in such cases. Should he succeed in making such a contract for the men, he would give them back their things; if not, they must remain in his hands; and in either case he would be amply remunerated for his outlay and trouble.

These landlords make a great deal of money by this species of slave-trade. It frequently happens that they, in the first instance, persuade the men to leave their ship, and, when a good reward is offered for their recapture, give information of their whereabouts either to the captain of the ship himself, or to the police, with whom they generally share the booty.

It was said that the landlord of the Golden Cross had in this manner got together the whole of his fortune. He always kept a certain number of such persons about the house, and they boarded and lodged with him. This was, however, only when they had no longer reason to fear legal proceedings. While these were pending he knew of a better and a more secure place for them. To such a retreat he sent the men from the *Boreas*, whom he did not wish on any account to be seen in the tavern.

Our story brings us to the 22nd of August. Late on the evening of that day a rumour which had been whispered about for several days gained general circu-

lation. It was to the effect that the captain of the *Boreas* had formed a crew, and was about to go to sea. Nevertheless, it did not appear safe for any of the men to leave their hiding-place; and Polly had strongly urged upon the otherwise rather careless Jean not on any account to be seen near the Golden Cross.

This injunction was most punctually obeyed by Jean. He did not allow himself to be seen near the spot which in his eyes possessed the greatest attraction. This was, however, to be understood literally; for when all was quite dark he was sure to be in the Golden Cross itself. He gave Polly a certain signal, and slipped up two pairs of stairs into the little back room, where, when she could spare a few minutes from her work downstairs, she went up to have a quiet chat of some little duration. For better security, Jean had given all his money to Polly. Polly, in return, had promised to marry him as soon as the *Boreas* was fairly out of sight.

Jean's object was to open a small business in Sydney in partnership with a fellow-countryman whom he had met by chance; and the prospects were at that time peculiarly favourable.

With his comrades, meanwhile, he lived on the opposite side of the bay, on the so-called north shore, in a small, solitary house. It was situated on a spot in the *bush*, which was rarely visited by anybody; and certainly nobody would have thought of looking there for runaway sailors.

That same evening, about eight o'clock, Polly might have been seen in conversation with our old acquaintance, Charles, of the water-police. The inn was almost deserted that evening. Mr. MacCarthy slept in the bar, and the landlady sat quietly in her chair, busily engaged with some needlework, occasionally casting a rather ill-humoured glance on two customers, who had been sitting some time over a glass of brandy and *water*. Polly was not missed.

"*You* understand our agreement," said Charles, as

they were about to part. The young man held out his hand, and kept Polly's in his grasp. "All must be done as agreed upon, and, let me add, there are to be *no exceptions.*"

"I do not know," said Polly, a little sharply, "what you mean by exceptions. If I make a promise, you may rely upon it."

"Polly," replied Charles, smiling, "I told you that I had been informed by two different persons that you are engaged to one of the Frenchmen."

Polly withdrew her hand from his grasp, saying angrily, "To a Frenchman! I thought you knew me better than to suppose I should throw myself away on a frog-eater. That he has courted me is true. One may accept a present that's offered, may one not? That is the whole affair; and remember, if you again ——"

A shrill whistle, coming from the yard, interrupted the speech; and Polly trembled so violently, that Charles could not fail to notice it, even in the dark hall.

"Hallo!" he said in an undertone. Polly moved as if anxious to go to the yard; but Charles seized her by the arm, and whispered, "First wait here a minute, Polly; we will go together directly."

Stealthy steps were now heard gliding up the stairs cautiously but quickly. It was evident that the person, whoever he might be, had gone that way many a time before. Charles perceived the fact; for as the sound of the steps grew fainter, he said, laughing as if to himself, "Well, that chap knows every stair in the house, I'll swear. This will be the first six pounds—eh, Polly?"

The girl stood for a moment as if lost in thought. She did not answer a word. At last, as a door upstairs was heard to open slowly and shut again, she said, speaking more to her self than to the young man at her side, "He has given me money to keep."

"I should *not* have thought him so silly," observed *Charles, drily.* "Sailors never know how to keep

their money. Now go into the room, Polly; I will wait a little here before entering, that no suspicion may fall on you."

"But, Charles, ——"

"But, Polly!—And don't you give him a signal—do you hear? I shall not go away; I shall remain standing here. Good-bye, Polly! To-night we shall not be able to have any more conversation together; but to-morrow at noon, I shall come and bring you word; and do not let the old people know anything about the matter." Saying these words, Charles took hold of the girl, who scarcely made any resistance, and kissed her. Then, as if to cut short all further objection or hesitation, he opened the door; he crept behind it, and there was really nothing left for Polly to do, but to enter; and, in order to conceal her agitation, she bustled about the room, and put the things in order.

While engaged in these matters, she heard three taps at the window that looked out in the street; they seemed to be given by a heavy stick. This startled Polly so much, that she let a glass she had in her hand drop, and it broke into a hundred pieces. While Mrs. MacCarthy was giving her the usual scolding for the accident, the two men who had been sitting at the table rose, and slowly left the room. This was little calculated to put the landlady into a better humour.

The shabby fellows! they have been sitting here two hours, and only spent sixpence between them. This don't pay for broken glasses and candles. If I had my will, I would chop the tables and forms for firewood sooner than assist these idle, lazy vagabonds in their bad ways and idleness."

Mr. MacCarthy, who had been roused from his nap by the noise made in the breaking of the glass, looked cautiously round the room. As he did not notice anybody, he was about to relapse into his former state of *repose, when* he heard a heavy step coming from the *hall. He had* scarcely had time to get ready to receive

a guest with proper dignity, when Charles put in his head, saying,—

"Mr. MacCarthy, one word, if you please."

Polly listened with the utmost anxiety, and her heart beat violently; but she could make out nothing. The men went up-stairs together. She followed cautiously, ran to the door, and opened it. She heard a noise, and suddenly a key was turned in the lock; then came a knock, and again everything was quiet. A minute afterwards there was a sound as if somebody was breaking open a door. "Polly!" It was Mr. MacCarthy's voice. Polly turned round, and at the same moment a number of sailors entered the room by the door in the centre. Brandy, ale, porter, port wine, all imaginable kinds of beverage were demanded, and Polly would have given anything to have had a quarter of an hour free at that moment. Presently, she heard steps as of people coming down-stairs. Voices sounded in the hall, and the murmur was lost in the distance. Almost at the same moment, Mr. MacCarthy entered, slammed the door behind him until all the windows shook, seized his hat, and speedily departed.

Immediately afterwards, everything was quiet, and Polly muttered to herself, "Thank Heaven, all is over!"

Charles, on calling Mr. MacCarthy into the hall, said in a friendly tone of voice, "Mr. MacCarthy, would you have the kindness to let me have another peep into the little back-room on your second floor—I mean myself and my two friends here?"—the two men who had excited Mrs. MacCarthy's wrath by sitting so long over their nobbler.* "I and my friends here wish to have a look round."

"With the greatest pleasure," said Mr. MacCarthy, to whom such inquiries were nothing new. He cautiously ascended the staircase, keeping in advance of his visitors. He had little idea of the shock he was about to sustain.

* Half a glass.

Charles knew well enough in what direction to look. They found the door bolted on the inside; it was quickly forced, and the next moment Jean was in irons and in charge of one of the policemen, who led the captive, on receiving his orders, down to the water-police office.

The innkeeper looked quite aghast at this discovery, which might be followed by disagreeable consequences. He volunteered the most emphatic assurances of his innocence and entire ignorance of what had happened. Charles understood that it was to his interest to keep on good terms with the landlord, and he therefore assured Mr. MacCarthy, that he knew well enough the prisoner had not lived with him—nay, he himself had followed him up the whole street as far as the house; and it was his belief that the Frenchman had taken refuge in this house because he heard somebody following him closely. In this manner, Jean hoped to give his pursuer the slip; he did not know that he chanced to be so much at home at the Golden Cross.

Mr. MacCarthy passed his hand over his brow, placed it on Charles's arm, and led him aside, while one of his men led the prisoner off.

"Mr. Charles," he whispered confidentially, "is not a reward of six pounds sterling each offered for the runaway men belonging to the *Boreas?* I believe I heard so this evening, and I was going to call upon you to-morrow morning."

"Indeed!" replied Charles, with a smile; "have you got scent of something?"

"Scent!" said MacCarthy, slowly, pinching the policeman's arm confidentially; "would you like to get a good bonus, my boy?"

The young man stooped down, placed his mouth close to the ear of the innkeeper, and whispered, "By going over to the north shore, to Kennedy's old hut, eh?"

MacCarthy retreated a step, and looked at him *in amazement.* Charles laughed. "Yes, yes, my sly *old fox,*" he continued, in a louder tone; "some people

have better noses than you imagine; mine can smell as far as the north shore; and besides," he continued, in an undertone, "down at the wharf a boat is waiting with twelve men; in half an hour we shall be at the spot, and the day after to-morrow the *Boreas* will sail. The wind is favourable, and I have given my word. Good evening, MacCarthy." Saying these words, he hastened into the street, followed by his companion. MacCarthy, as we before stated, rushed into the bar, seized his hat, and hurried by a different road down to the water. But Charles had taken his measures with care; he knew the place well, and had ordered two of his men to watch the neighbourhood all the afternoon, and to keep an eye upon the movements of the runaways. Thus the poor sailors were completely sold, just at the moment that they felt themselves safe.

The boat grounded; two men, well-armed, were left to guard it. The little cottage was then surrounded, and the men of the *Boreas* were arrested and handcuffed; the only exceptions were a German and a Frenchman, who had gone to town to get provisions. They happened to be just returning as the police entered the house, and they fled into the bush, where they remained concealed. Luckily they had provisions, and were thus secure from hunger and thirst until the *Boreas* had sailed.

Just as the boat with the policemen and their prisoners left the shore, another little, swift-sailing craft, carrying two men, entered a neighbouring creek, formed by a protruding rock. One of the men jumped on shore, and stood looking at the departure of the other boat. He appeared overwhelmed by disappointment. It was too dark to distinguish the person, but Charles had every reason to believe he had made a good guess, as he shouted out,

"Good evening, Mr. MacCarthy."

The form of the man quickly disappeared among the bushes; and half an hour afterwards, the little craft might have been seen on its way back to the town.

On Monday morning the signal for the water-police was made from the *Boreas*. All was ready for setting sail, the pilot was on board, the anchor weighed, and the sails hanging loosely on the yards. A fine breeze blew from the west, and nothing could be more favourable. On a sudden two small boats shot round the castle. They belonged to the water-police, who were bringing the prisoners on board. They were all handcuffed, being numerous, and the police afraid of another attempt at an escape. Therefore, they would not let the men take their manacles off, even to get on board. A strong rope was let down, fastened around the handcuffs, and thus the prisoners were hauled upon the deck. Once on board, their gyves were speedily removed. The men's clothes, which had been left in pawn at the Golden Cross, were also brought on board again. The captain got Charles to redeem them from Mr. MacCarthy's. He could not take his men to sea without their things. Nor was this act in any way to be attributed to motives of humanity, as he knew from whose pockets the cost would come. The sailors, up to that moment, seemed to have entertained doubts as to whether the ship was really to go to sea at once. Probably they cherished some vague notion of rescue, as men are apt to do in such situations; and only when they saw the sails unfurled and the pilot on board, did the reality and hardship of their fate become apparent.

The carpenter was in great glee at seeing the discomfiture of the runaways, who, on the morning of their flight, had left him in such a disgraceful state. He could not help inquiring particularly concerning Bill's and Jean's health. Bill answered with a curse; Jean laughed in his face; for, though his own affairs by no means wore a pleasant aspect, he could not help grinning at the thought of the helpless figure the carpenter had cut, when they had him down, bound and gagged. Other matters, however, soon occupied *his attention.*

The police finished their task, and were getting ready

to return to their boats, when Jean stepped up to Charles and seized him by the arm.

"Ah, Jean!" said the policeman, turning to him blandly; "something you want done for you on shore? I shall execute your commission with the greatest pleasure."

"Nothing but this letter," said the young man. "I did not think we should have gone to sea so soon;—and I know you are not a stranger in that house," he added, not without some bitterness; "perhaps you would be so good as to forward this letter; but let it be done to-day."

Charles read the address,—"Miss Mary Whitley, Golden Cross," and placing the letter inside his straw hat, said, "I shall deliver it punctually, and that before dinner. Anything else, Jean?"

"Thank you, nothing else," replied the sailor, going slowly to the forecastle, where the men were securing the anchor. Preparations were speedily made for a start, and in a few moments the ship flew before the wind. Half-an-hour later they were between the Heads,—the two steep rock walls forming the entrance to the beautiful harbour of Sydney.

Here the pilot and others left the ship. More sail was set, and running before the splendid breeze, the *Boreas* held her course for the open sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VOYAGE.

THE *Boreas* had hardly got clear of the land, when the breeze freshened, and she shot through the waves like an arrow. Towards evening, the wind grew stronger and stronger, and the captain ordered the sails to be reefed. One of the runaways, whose recapture we have related, was on the sick list. This was no other than

the English sailor, Jack, who had come on board with a slight fever. He was speedily joined by Hans, the German who had remained on board when the others made off. On that same morning, he had received a wound in the thigh, and though it had been twice properly dressed, it hurt him very much. He could not put his foot to the ground, and consequently had to remain in his berth.

Beside these two and the captain, with his two mates, the crew numbered only ten persons—namely, the steward and carpenter, the cook (a Negro), three Englishmen (our old acquaintances "Bill, Bob, and Jim"), two Frenchmen (Jean and François), two Germans, and a boy.

This boy was a Malay, and usually attended to the cabin, especially when the ship carried passengers. He helped the steward and cook. Moreover, his services were required as a sailor; so he was taken to the forecastle, and did his work and kept his watch with the others.

Had the *Boreas* been properly manned, she would have had double this number of men. But as matters stood in Sydney, the captain was glad to get away even with these, and hoped to manage well enough till he reached India. In fair weather and an open sea a ship may be navigated by few hands. The men had assembled in the cabin at supper. Suspicious-looking pieces of salt bacon and beef were served up with hard and mouldy ship-biscuit. From a large tin-can they drank the smoking liquor that passed for tea.

"That's your doing, you rogues," muttered the carpenter, helping himself to a mug of tea, as this liquor was by a figure of speech called; "I really believe we are to be kept on short provisions on your account, and I am obliged to slop that precious stuff. Cook, you *scamp*, what kind of drink have you been making *here*? *Do* you call this shaving-water tea, eh?"

"*Can't* help it, man," said the Negro, who had just

come down-stairs, and was lighting his pipe by the small lamp that hung in the middle of the cabin. He shrugged his shoulders, and tried to look sorrowful about the matter. Then he began to roll his large eyes, and fixed them upon each of the men in turn, until he had been all round. Any one might easily have seen that the carpenter's anger at the weakness of the tea did not trouble him much. "Massa steward," he added, "gives us just a few little pinches of tea; he said, that if the men were at the diggings they would not get very strong tea there. Serve them right."

"Oho!" grumbled the carpenter, "if that is the state of the case, I shall be after having my tea by myself. I can stand a joke well enough if it's not carried too far; but swigging warm water always makes me feel queer."

He put his mug down on the chest on which he had been sitting, and ran up on deck.

"Holloa, doctor!" this title is generally given on board ship to the cook, who takes it with an appearance of dignity. "Holloa, doctor!" cried Bill, after the carpenter had disappeared; and as he spoke he took up a piece of bacon on his fork, examined it carefully, and then threw it back, "Shiver my timbers, if I don't believe they have brought that old cask of bacon which was condemned four weeks ago. If the captain and steward think, because they have caught us, they will starve us, I imagine they will find themselves out in their calculations. I only know that a certain Bill Stumper will get so ill, that he'll go to his berth, and find it requisite for his health to take a dose of salts every morning as long as this article lasts, which cannot be for ever. The captain may then find some one else to do Bill's work."

The cook looked round to see whether the carpenter had returned, and then said in an undertone,—

"Massa Bill, Timor"—this was the name given to the boy, *and taken* from the island whence he came—"*Timor has heard* captain telling steward to open the

old cask, and to give to crew. Would make crew pay for going away, he said."

"Indeed, that's what he calls making us pay!" said Jean, laughing. "A rope strained too much may break, and we have not reached Calcutta yet.'

"I'm glad Massa Carpenter got to eat and drink with the rest," said Doctor Cook with a laugh; "serve him right for kicking up shines."

"Yes, that's right; but Hans is not treated better," said the other German, "and he did not try to escape."

"Ah! but he would not betray our hiding-place," grumbled Bill; "and that is why he has to fare the same as we do. If it were not for this carpenter, all might be very comfortably settled. I know a way of getting at the store-room, but that sneak would betray his own brother. I really believe he would do anything to curry favour with the skipper."

"Steward's the worst," said the doctor, in a lower tone than before; "cannot bear Massa Jean, because he once gave him such a thrashing. He want to make up for that."

"Let him look out, or I shall be down upon him again," muttered Jean between his teeth. "Next time it will be done in better style. At any rate the will is not wanting."

Suddenly all hands were summoned on deck to alter the position of the sails. The men did not obey so readily as might have been desired, and a volley of oaths was the result.

The cook had to take his turn in the watch, and his duties were proportionately increased by the illness of the two men. Owing to the constant changes in the direction of the wind, the sails required continual attention. Towards noon the appearance of the sky betokened a storm, and preparations were accordingly made. The *Boreas* pursued her course through the *boiling, foaming* waves, under closely-reefed sails with a storm-jib set. The storm lasted for nearly three days, and as the wind came from the land the sea did not

high as would have been the case had it blown
he other direction. The ship consequently kept
r on her course at the rate of about ten miles
r. Few alterations were now necessary, and she
but little sail.

horses fared the worst under the circumstances.
ad not had time to get accustomed even to a
a before the gale arose, and they had to en-
r strong weather. Two of them died on the
orning, and one managed, somehow or other, in
ght, to break one of its hind legs, which had
between the fence that separated the stalls.
or animal was thrown overboard with the two
ad died. Proper treatment, under the circum-
, was impossible. The horses were attended to
l by the sailors in turn. One can easily imagine
crew, treated in an unfriendly manner by the
, did not show much eagerness for this occupa-
hich, generally speaking, is distasteful to sailors
nder more pleasant circumstances. The horses
oreover, frightened by the strong motion of the

The tossing did not improve their tempers,
e various noises on board ship rendered them
ore restive. They had not a sufficient supply of
darkness was intolerable, and the change from
n on land to imprisonment on board ship only
to make matters worse. The men ran great
a broken limb from the excited animals; each
n was more or less covered with bruises. Even
hey were fed, the horses tried to bite the man who
he bucket, and Bill certainly suggested (whether
or earnest it might be difficult to decide), that the
lot ought to be poisoned forthwith, and thus got

second mate, a quiet and well-meaning man,
in his power—which was not much—to get the
nto a contented frame of mind. It was his duty
ribute *the provisions*; and on the second day he
sured them that they should have better food

as soon as the captain and the steward gave him a chance of making an alteration, which he ventured to express a hope could not fail to happen in the course of a few days.

The second mate also assisted the men in attending to the horses; but neither the steward nor the carpenter showed the slightest inclination to help. They always had, they pretended, too many indispensable duties to which they were compelled to attend.

CHAPTER IX.

HANS.

On the fourth day the wind veered towards the south, and gradually fell. Thus the sea, to a certain degree, became calm; but the *Boreas* pursued her course, and rolled a great deal. As she was in ballast with the horses below, the hay being stowed away between the decks, she had settled down a little in the bows. She sailed evenly enough with a side wind; but whenever the wind happened to catch her in any other quarter, she would roll very much, sometimes dipping her yards in the waves. Indeed, she sometimes appeared as if she would never right again.

The horses fared worse under these circumstances than from the pitching of the ship. On the very next day a fourth died, and two more bruised themselves in a very dangerous manner. Captain Oilytt became furious. He went down to inspect them, and, on seeing the state in which some of the animals were, he worked himself into a furious passion, declaring that if one more of the horses got a single scratch, he would flog every man jack of the crew, and have them most *severely* punished.

Captain Oilytt, among other estimable qualities,

was fond of the bottle. After dinner he took what he called his digestive drop—a tumbler-full of brandy and hot water, with a little lemon juice;—he scorned sugar. Nor did he stop there; the digestive drops were followed by others, until his face glowed and his eyes sparkled. When in this condition, it was his custom to look about for "a little sport," as he called it; and for this purpose he went on deck or down into the fore-cabin. Woe to the man who, in these moments, happened to come across his path, or gave him cause for displeasure. Frequently he assailed his victim bodily; and as he was a broad-shouldered, brawny man, and moreover the captain of the ship, there was a strong presumption of the right being found on his side in case of any judicial inquiry. The crew were careful not to get into any scrape with him, and kept out of his way.

Time passed in this manner, and the eighth day since their departure from Sydney arrived. The wind blew pretty steadily from south-south-east, and the *Boreas*, pursuing her course, went steadily along the coast of Australia before a splendid breeze. The captain was in hopes of coming next day in sight of the reefs through which he expected to thread his way.

Torres Straits is the name of a pretty extensive passage, bounded on the south by the northern coast of Australia, and on the north by that of New Guinea, a large and as yet almost unexplored island.

Although it is so broad, the passage through these straits is always deemed dangerous, and requires the greatest prudence in a captain. It is studded, as it were, with islands and sandbanks, and with numerous coral reefs. In bad weather the attempt to navigate the passage is rarely or never made. To this must be added the fact, that in this latitude (partly, perhaps, in consequence of the numerous islands and the proximity of the warm climate of the Australian coast), the weather is very changeable, and *thick mists* and sudden squalls of wind are by no

means uncommon occurrences. Against these, sailors are compelled to adopt every precaution.

The reefs themselves are as singular as they are dangerous. They consist entirely of coral, and often, especially on this side of the Australian coast, they rise several thousand feet in height. They sometimes rise to the very surface, though they do not generally reach quite so high, and seldom or ever appear above the sea. In such cases their presence can only be detected by the broken water as it foams over these obstructions. Here and there the black form of a rock may be seen emerging from the white foam of the waves, indicating the outer extremity of a reef that may possibly branch out far and wide in various directions. The reef generally assumes a circular form. In many places the coral rocks rise abruptly to the surface, while in the immediate vicinity there is a depth of several fathoms of water.

Parallel with the Australian coast a regular succession of these reefs extends from south to north as far as the coast of New Guinea. There are occasional narrow and tortuous channels, in which navigation is attended with the utmost danger. In this locality a strong current sets towards the east, and the waves break with the utmost power and fury. From a short distance, these reefs offer nothing to the eye but a single and interrupted streak of white foam stretching from south to north. Only as the vessel draws near can the sailor perceive a small dark entrance as if to a channel. Within these foaming breakers the passage conducts to a calm lake, in which the vessel may ride in safety. Yet these channels do not invariably prove aids to the mariner. The ship may not after all be enabled to proceed. The narrow passage is often subject to strong currents which threaten to dash the vessel on the reefs that rise up on every side. The peril is increased from the fact that the depth of the *water between* the reefs is at times so great that *no anchorage* can be obtained.

The captain had been particularly ill-humoured during the whole day. He had quarrelled with the second mate on some trifling matter relating to the provisions, or rather he had brought an accusation against him which, on closer examination, turned out to be entirely unfounded. Such was his ill-humour, that he sought to drown care by indulging in more than his usual allowance of digestive drops. While thus engaged, it suddenly occurred to him that some complaint against the second mate might be established in connexion with the horses. The captain therefore resolved to go down himself and see how the animals were getting on. He summoned the steward to follow him, and to assist in the inspection.

Jean stood at the helm, and Bill was not far off. He was on the quarter-deck, engaged in mending a large sail spread out before him, which had been much injured in a squall they had experienced during the voyage. The second mate, who had been lending a hand in the sail-mending, got up and went forward. Hans and François, were just then occupied in feeding and watering the horses. Hans had by this time so far recovered, that he was at least able to hobble about, and could assist in the most indispensable labours. Jack also had improved in health, though he still kept to his berth, being too weak to assist the others in their work.

"There will be a nice row presently," Jean observed in an undertone to Bill, who was sitting near him. At these words the latter cast a cautious look over the deck.

It is not customary on board ship to speak to the man who is steering. It is necessary that his attention should be exclusively confined to the course of the vessel.

"Our skipper is in an excellent humour," continued Jean—"and after a few more drops, there will be a chance of a squall. I should not wonder if he commenced *below*. There is nobody there on whom he

vent his anger. François doesn't understand what he says when he begins to scold, and Hans won't raise a finger, even if he gets the rope's end."

"You may be mistaken in that opinion," said Bill, with a shake of his head. "Hans takes things quietly for a time; but when they come to the worst, I think he will prove a Tartar. There is something in his eye I don't like, and I am sure he had special reasons for not joining in our frolic at Sydney. Certainly he did not hold back from cowardice."

"He has a wife and child at home," replied Jean, "and of course that helps to keep him steady."

"Nothing of the kind," said Bill; "you're all wrong there. He has no more wife and children at home than you or I have. I will tell you what his answer was when I asked him to join in the affair. He said that he had pledged his word of honour to the captain to remain on board ship, and that he could not break his promise."

"The deuce!" cried Jean, opening his eyes in wonder. "I should not have thought that of Hans. He is a queer fellow altogether; and though he pretends not to understand the language, yet I am sure that he can speak French. At any rate he understands everything, though I can never get him to reply. He always slinks away, and pretends that he cannot talk French. But I don't believe him."

"Sometimes I am inclined to think that he's not a German at all," said Bill; "although he generally speaks broken English, the other day he blurted out a volley of English words that rather startled me. The other night in his sleep, I'll be hanged if he did not speak English like a Londoner. Afterwards he talked a lot of gibberish — Dutch, I should say. Holloa! what is going on below? Don't you hear the row, Jean?"

"I did just now, I thought," said the other, in a *careless way*. "He is angry because he could not *make out his* case against the mate; perhaps, after

poking about everywhere, he has found another victim at last."

"Well!" Bill continued in reply; "it grows hotter below. Holloa, here comes the skipper! What's that red mark on his forehead—I really think he is bleeding. Now we shall have some news."

After this speech, Bill turned to his sail with renewed diligence, and worked away as if he had never once looked up from his occupation.

In the meanwhile things had gone on very strangely below. On reaching the hold, the captain found Hans and François briskly engaged feeding and watering the horses. The animals turned restive, and jumped about when the pail was placed before them.

It was, of course, very dark below, for very little light crept in through the small bull's-eye. The heat was also oppressive. After having been down for a short time, the eye became more and more accustomed to the darkness, and could distinguish objects with greater ease. But a person only just coming down the staircase groped about like a blind man.

On coming down, the captain stumbled over the first thing that came in his way. The steward, lantern in hand, was walking behind, and consequently he was not a great assistance to his master. The first intimation the two men had of the presence of their captain was a volley of curses at the obstacle that caused him to stumble and the negligence of those who had left it in the way.

"Parbleu!" said François in French to Hans—for the two, according to an agreement they had made between themselves, used to speak their respective languages, the one French, and the other German; "the skipper is in a delightful mood to-day. I should not be sorry if he went a little nearer to that chesnut horse over there. They would soon get to loggerheads."

The chesnut horse of which François spoke was the *most malicious animal* of the lot. Indeed, Hans was

the only person whom he suffered to approach him to give him water and fodder. As soon as any of the others came near, the vicious brute stretched out his head and gave the intruder a gripe. Thus everybody who came within his reach had good reason to repent his temerity. The other horses were much more gentle, though at times they would bite and kick at each other.

"He has no good object in view in coming down here at this time," said Hans, almost in a whisper. "Come here," he shouted to the black horse, at the side of which he was standing. The animal appeared disturbed by the light of the approaching lantern.

Hans stepped back as the horse plunged as far as his halter would allow. "Be quiet, my boy—nobody will do you any harm. Take your water, for the others are waiting. Steward, don't hold the lantern under his nose," he added, quietly, turning round to the steward, who had come up with the captain, and was holding the light as high as possible, in order to see what was going on. "He shies at the glare, and will break the halter." The steward lowered the light, and was in the act of stepping back, when the captain observed a scratch on the animal's neck. It had been chafed by the rope, and was easily seen as the horse drew back.

"Here, steward, just give me the lantern," the captain said quickly. "Hang me, if they won't utterly ruin these horses, if I don't look after them now and then. Whoa—whoa! my beast—stand still!—the deuce take you!"

The horse, frightened at having the light placed so close to him, kept backing more and more, until he was almost strangled by his halter. His eyes stood out from his head, and just as the captain raised his arm quickly with the lantern, and approached him, muttering imprecations, the halter snapped in two.—*The horse* fell back on his haunches. Fortunately *he was, as a necessary precaution*, fastened by another

rope round his neck; but this was much longer, and therefore left him more space for his struggles. The animal immediately recovered himself, and pranced about, frightening the other horses with the noise. They began neighing and kicking, and a clamour was raised as if they would have beaten the ship to pieces.

The turmoil had not yet reached its highest point. A single horse had hitherto remained completely quiet —had not so much as stirred even a limb. He stood with his head bent forward, rolling his large eyes maliciously. This was the same chesnut horse of which François had before spoken. He seemed to be patiently waiting for an object for his next attack. The steward stood close to him, unconscious of the danger; in his hand he held the lantern which the captain had handed him again. He was not three paces distant from the spot where the chesnut horse, gnashing his teeth, was eagerly waiting for the next movement of his expected victim. This movement soon followed. In order to pacify the horses, the captain ordered the steward to go away with the light. The steward prepared to obey this order, but had hardly made a step in advance when, uttering a shrill cry of anguish, he let the lantern fall. The chesnut horse, without further warning, had stretched his head over the beams, and seizing the man just above the hips, held him firmly between his strong teeth. There was no chance of freeing him from his assailant. "Fie!—down horse!" cried Hans, who, on account of his lame leg, could not approach as quickly as he wished to free the prisoner. The chesnut horse, however obedient he might on other occasions have shown himself to the commands of the man who brought him his food, this time did not seem inclined to relinquish his hold of the steward, who cried piteously, until the captain sprang forward, and tried to release him. The animal, however, only loosened his hold in order to seize a new victim. He did not, however, imprint his teeth in the captain's *body, but struck him* a violent blow that made him

stagger; he also struck his head against the post on the other side, as he was getting up. The chestnut horse was about to renew his attack, but Hans sprang forward, and drove the animal back into his stall. He then began to neigh, either for pleasure or in defiance. But the steward crept like a serpent through the narrow passage, and did not stop till he was nearly on deck; there he remained, shouting "that this was a shameful trick, for he himself had seen Hans exciting the brute against him."

"Stupid fellow!" Hans exclaimed, half in jest, half in earnest; and at the same time turned round to fasten the horse that had escaped, and to endeavour to appease the rest. He was not, however, to get off so easily; for Captain Oilytt, enraged by rum, anger, and his fall, actually foamed at the mouth for passion, and was only looking out for some object on which to vent his anger. François perceived this, and got out of harm's way as fast as he could. Hans too felt that the captain was likely to pick a quarrel with him, but he pretended to be quite innocent of his intention.

"You precious rogues here teach the horses all sorts of damnable tricks. You would be all the better for a taste of the cat-o'-nine-tails!" cried the captain. Hans allowed this first outbreak to pass off without attempting to answer, and busied himself with the horses.

"You rascal!" cried the captain—"I'm speaking to you. Will you be kind enough to answer when I speak to you? What does all this mean? Things are left about, and I run the risk of breaking my neck. The horses are bruised, and so badly fastened that they can knock against one another. I will have this place set in order, or I'll have all of you flogged."

Hans shrank back, as if he had really received a blow, and stopped for a moment, as if hesitating what to do. Whatever might have been in his mind, his reason got the upper hand. "Patience—patience!" he murmured to himself; and taking up a fork lying beside

him, he gathered up the hay he had brought for the horses, and which had been thrown about.

The captain possibly heard these last words; for he rushed furiously towards the sailor, and seizing him by the throat, cried, "What does the dog grumble about? Will you set me at defiance? Say another word, you wretch, and I will knock your malicious head off your shoulders." With these words, he took the fork from the grasp of the unresisting sailor, and raised it in a threatening manner, as if to strike him.

Hans did not utter another word; he only turned half round, and looked his master steadily in the face. He had become pale as death, and his lame leg, on which he had been obliged to stand for such a long time, suddenly pained him so much that he was obliged to catch hold of the nearest post in order to keep himself from falling.

"An idle, miserable crew!" exclaimed the captain, in his drunken rage, raising his arm, yet not actually striking the man, who stood opposite him without offering the least sign of resistance. "An idle, miserable crew, no more fit for sailors than so many niggers. What does the fool stand gaping there for? Will you go about your business, and water the horses?"

Hans turned away. As his weight rested on his lame leg, he almost broke down from acute pain, but still tried to conquer and conceal it. In turning quickly round he upset the lantern which stood beside him, but immediately picked it up and hung it on a peg.

"Awkward brute!" cried the captain: and while the sailor was still engaged in his work, he struck him on the neck with the handle of the fork.

"Captain!" cried the ill-used man, at last roused to anger, "I have done my duty as far as lay in my power, and I've not deserved ill-treatment."

"Beast!" screamed the captain, delighted at having at last a case in hand against one who showed himself rebellious. Raising the fork so as to bring the prongs

uppermost, he continued, "Will you mutiny?" and the next moment made another blow at the sailor's head. Fortunately, it missed its aim and fell against the post, causing the horses to shrink back in terror. As they stamped, kicked, and reared, a firm grip pressed upon the captain's throat, and a heavy blow brought him to the ground.

CHAPTER X.

THE REPRIEVE.

An hour after the events described in the last chapter had taken place, the captain lay in his berth, with cloths damped with vinegar bound about his head, and the German sailor, Hans, was in irons.

The captain had reserved his punishment for the next day, meaning to "make an example of him," as he expressed himself. He held a long consultation on the subject with the second mate.

The steward was also confined to his berth; his body, where the horse had taken hold of him, being much swollen—and he moaned and groaned with pain.

Jack was not in a much better state; he had a very violent return of fever that evening, and could not think of getting up. The captain's watch had, in consequence, been so much diminished in numbers, that the cook was obliged to join in the party, a duty from which he would most willingly have been excused.

A gloomy and portentous silence reigned amongst the crew. Hans was a general favourite, on account of his quiet, unpretending manners; and there was not a steadier or more skilful sailor on board. The account of the affair given by François' friend, who had been an eye-witness of the whole scene, did not render the men more favourably disposed towards the captain. Yet, after all, the man had certainly laid hands on

his superior, and an awe, almost as it were innate, filled the men. They spoke of his punishment as a matter of course—as something which, however great might have been the provocation, could not be remitted.

"Whatever could have possessed that Hans?" observed Jack, as the men sat down to supper. "I should never have believed that he would take the law into his own hands and become altogether outrageous."

"I told you yesterday," Bill replied, with a laugh, "I thought more than once this little Dutchman was of the right sort, and there was only a good steel wanted to strike fire out of that flint. It's a pity he did not finish off the old scoundrel at once, and then we should have been rid of him altogether." At the termination of this speech he looked round to see whether the carpenter had heard him. He was, however, already on deck.

"It's a pity for us, but not for him," replied Jean, thoughtfully. "The poor devil has got himself into a bad scrape. I should not like to be in his skin to-morrow."

"Why, they cannot do anything worse to him than keep him in irons," said Carl, quickly; "and that's punishment enough for the present. When we come into port, he may be given up to the officers of justice; and they won't be so hard with him, after all."

"That depends on the weather," observed Bill, drily.

"On the weather!" ejaculated Bob. "How does it depend on the weather? You mean the skipper's whims, don't you?"

"I mean the weather," repeated Bill. "I don't know whether he is justified, even in self-defence, in striking the captain. But if the weather happens to be foul to-morrow,—and it looks just as if we should have to cruize about here before those precious reefs for some time to come,—then the skipper, while we are short of hands, cannot keep him in irons, unless he wants some fine day to lose one or two of his masts. To prevent such a disaster, Hans will be released, though the skipper

will most likely make him undergo some heavy punishment."

"It is not lawful for him either to strike him, or to have him flogged," cried Carl, indignantly.

"It is not lawful!" said Bill, with a bitter smile. "I should like to know who will hinder him. If we should attempt to do it, that would be mutiny. If Hans, when he comes on shore, were to bring an action against the captain, I wager three months' pay against a quid of tobacco that the captain will be found to be in the right. Hans, poor fellow, would either be put in prison or, at the best, reprimanded and admonished to behave better in future. That's what people call justice."

"I, for one, will not raise a hand against our shipmate," said Carl, "if they put me in irons myself."

"Your help will not be required," observed Bill; "that's an affair for the boatswain; and as Spahn does duty in that line at present, he will be sure to take upon himself all the little jobs of this and a similar kind that may happen to turn up. But I hope we shall get the right sort of weather; and then, perhaps, it will blow over quietly."

"I do not really believe that the captain means to have him flogged," said Jean, trying to banish the displeasing idea from his own mind and from the minds of his comrades. "He may be bad enough when he is in his cups; but in the morning he is generally quiet, and does not even swear much."

"Don't count upon his being better in the morning than in the afternoon," struck in Bob, who had remained quietly in his corner without as yet joining in the conversation. "I once saw him engaged in such a business in the morning, and don't want to see him at it again."

Bob and Hans were the only members of the crew who had sailed together in the same ship on a former voyage and with the same captain. Bob could never be induced to relate the details of that voyage. Now

all his comrades collected around him with great interest, hoping that he would at length relate the circumstances of the case to which he had just alluded. Bob, who seemed to wish to avoid being pressed on this head, stood up, lighted his pipe, and went on deck. Immediately afterwards the carpenter came down, and no further conversation on the topic ensued.

The prisoner had some water and a ship-biscuit conveyed to him by the second mate, at the order of the captain. This kind-hearted man added of his own accord a piece of meat and a small flask of rum. He also tried to cheer the poor fellow's heart, and told him not to anticipate the worst, but that all would end well.

"All end well!" said Hans almost to himself, with a bitter smile. At the same time he thanked the mate, who stood beside him, for his kind words. "All end well! Be assured that the captain will do everything he possibly can, so that things should not end well with me. The power is now in his hands. The tables have been turned."

"The tables have been turned?" repeated the mate, amazed. "What do you mean by that?"

"Or, they may yet turn, perhaps. That's what I meant to say," replied the sailor, draining the flask. "I do not speak English well, mate, and you must not be too nice about my words."

"The deuce, man, you speak very good English to-night; much better than I can remember to have heard you speak before. You have learnt it very rapidly of late."

"When one hears nothing else all day long," observed the prisoner, "something must, of course, stick. Many people manage to learn it, and why should my head be harder than theirs?"

"Well, cheer up, man," said the mate; "and when you have done with the flask put it here in the corner, between the two beams. That sneak, the steward, might take it into his head to get up; and if he should

put his hand upon it, the captain would know all about it in less than five minutes."

"Is the steward ill?" asked Hans, astonished. "What ails him?"

"You witnessed the affair yourself, and it is said that you made the horse bite him," answered the mate, with a quiet chuckle, as he thought over the mishap that had befallen a man generally disliked on board the ship.

"Oh, did the chesnut horse take such a good hold of him?" said Hans, with a shake of his head. "Yes, yes, horses will bite rather sharply if they once get angry. But, tell me, is he laid up?"

"He is. But I cannot stay any longer; it is my watch on deck; therefore, good night, Hans." As he said this, he took his lantern and retraced his way on deck. Hans was left alone in the dark.

The next morning the wind had almost fallen to a calm, and the ship made but little progress. The day before they had hardly taken any observation, and again about noon was the sun obscured. According to their calculations, they were approaching the southern entrance of the reefs. The wind being light and variable, rendered caution necessary. It would, under the circumstances, have been highly dangerous to run too near to the reefs, for the current was at that period of the year very strong. If a calm should come on before they made the reefs, there was the greatest probability of their being driven against them; and to anchor was, from the depth of the water, impossible.

The morning had passed, and the captain had not mentioned the prisoner. About three in the afternoon the second mate received orders to bring Hans on deck. Towards the south-west, thick masses of clouds might be seen, and many signs of a disagreeable night.

Hans turned deadly pale when he came upon deck. He had advanced with the mate close behind him, and, at a sign made to him by the latter, he halted. Whether his leg still pained him, or whether he felt

overcome by his emotions, he leaned against a cask standing near, and thus awaited the arrival of the captain, who soon approached across the quarter-deck.

Captain Oilytt looked the very opposite of Hans. He was fiery red in the face, and on his forehead appeared a large and long black plaster. This covered the wound from the blow inflicted by the poor fellow in irons before him. His eyes were fixed, though only for a very short time, on the prisoner, who met his gaze firmly. He glanced with a look of anxiety from the deck to the sails, and higher still to the clouds, and then ordered the mate, in a hoarse and scarcely intelligible voice, to pipe all hands on deck.

The different members of the crew arrived silently and collected around Hans, each one of them stealthily casting a friendly and encouraging glance towards the prisoner, with the exception only of the carpenter.

A slight and bitter smile stole over the prisoner's features. Then his glance was directed again towards the clouds arising in the south-west, and which he had before already been attentively scanning. Bill, who stood near him, observed his motions, and said in an undertone—

"I don't think you are mistaken; we shall have foul weather this evening; and if the governor does not soon get ready——." He was interrupted by the captain's voice. The petty despot had stepped up close to the narrow iron railing that separated the quarter-deck from the other part of the ship, and thus addressed the men, in a voice which, far from being loud, could not even be called distinct.

"Lads! you know that yesterday this German sailor here—can't you stand upright, sir, when you are spoken to—eh?"

Hans tried to do as the captain desired, but he found he could not manage it without holding fast somewhere, and endeavoured, as a last resource, to support himself by placing his foot against the barrel.

"His leg still hurts him," said the second mate in an undertone to the captain, at whose back he stood.

"His leg be hanged," replied the captain, rudely and in a loud tone of voice. "Besides, sir, I did not ask your opinion; I do not see why you should venture to speak."

"I only wished to suggest——"

"You need not suggest anything, sir. Be quiet. Hang it! I will keep order on board, or go to the bottom, with ship and crew and all; and heaven have mercy on those who make me angry! As I said before, lads, this German sailor yesterday, when I had to reprimand him on account of the disorder and carelessness below, first made use of improper expressions towards me, and then dared to make a murderous attack upon my person. Taking advantage of the darkness, he struck me on the head with some heavy instrument, and knocked me down."

"I would have staked my life," whispered Bill to the man beside him, "that he would tell the tale in this fashion. A lawyer could not have done it better."

"According to the law," continued the captain, "I might keep him in irons below during the rest of the voyage, until we reach India. As we are, however, short of hands, and several men are on the sick list, I could hardly do this, having due regard for the safety of the ship. Of course I cannot allow him to escape without some punishment before I bring him to a court of law at Calcutta. Consequently the boatswain here will, in your presence, give him fifty lashes, as a warning to you all for the future. You gave me trouble enough at Sydney, and I will not here, on board my own ship, be trifled with or be exposed to murderous attacks. Boatswain, do your duty."

The captain turned away, as if about to retrace his steps to the stern. He was, however, arrested by the prisoner, who called him back. The captain stood still, *not* deigning to turn more than half round.

"Captain," said Hans, who could scarcely utter a word for emotion, and also spoke very slowly, as he always did when speaking English.—"Captain, in Sydney nearly all your men deserted, but I did not, because I had pledged my *word* to remain."

"You did remain behind, indeed, you rogue, but for no better reason than because I had your wages for the last voyage in my hands," replied the captain, turning away again, with a laugh. "That was your reason, not your word of honour."

"Captain," again cried Hans, whose face was now purple with rage, "I remained because I had given my *word*, and I will pledge it again to you if you let me off this flogging. You know well enough how you provoked me. I was not in my senses when I struck at you, yet I used no weapon. Revoke your sentence, and I will work until the blood runs from my nails, or I will stay in irons if you like that better. You may put me on bread and water for the remainder of the voyage; you may keep every penny of my wages; but —no flogging!"

The captain stood still, not apparently paying the slightest attention to the appeal. At its close he quickly turned to the carpenter, and said, "I told you to do your duty. We have no more time to lose. A storm is rising. *Bob*, *Jim*, secure the prisoner: he may stand upright, or, if he prefers it, fall upon his knees."

"Captain," cried Hans, as the two sailors approached to carry out his orders. His voice sounded shrilly, and almost threatening, and in pure and fluent English, that even attracted the captain's attention, he added, "You *know* that I am in the habit of keeping my word. By heaven! let him who would lay hands upon me kill me at once, for, as I hope to be saved, I will murder him the moment I get my hands free."

"If matters stand thus, we will take good care that you don't get your hands free, my boy," said the captain, with a sneering laugh. "What good English

that fellow can talk all of a sudden! Fear is a good teacher. Very well, *murder* was the word. We will take every precaution. Now do your duty, boatswain, and lay it on well, or I will show you how it ought to be done on your own back. Do your duty, Bob and Jim. A plague upon it! Must I speak again?"

The two men stood by hesitatingly; yet to a direct order of the captain they dared not refuse obedience. They led the prisoner to the place of execution, where they bared his back. His arms and shoulders were tattooed, and on his breast he had, besides, three deep scars, that must have been there for years. They bound his hands high above his head. He spoke not another word, but let them do as they liked. The carpenter, who meanwhile had made preparations for carrying out the sentence, now approached the prisoner.

In the meantime lightning had flashed in the south-west, and at this moment a violent thunder-clap caused those who had hitherto been occupied with the prisoner to look up in amazement.

"Aloft!" cried the captain, finding that the weather had taken him all by surprise. "Reef—take in top-sails. Plague upon it, carpenter! leave that fellow, and look to the ship."

The men, glad to escape from their disagreeable task, ran to do the necessary work. Everything was in confusion, and nobody heeded the prisoner, who stood bound, with bared back.

Across the sea came a hollow, roaring sound. Clouds thickened over the horizon, and the waves began to dash and to foam before the rising storm. Some sails were taken in as quickly as the small number of the crew would allow. In this extremity the want of more hands became painfully apparent. The men had all to join to reef a single sail, and even then they were hardly sufficient for the work. Before they could take in one sail the storm had burst upon them, tearing in its course the sails from the masts. The captain, seeing the havoc, stamped angrily with his foot.

"Shall I set Hans free?—he can lend a helping hand," said the first mate to the captain, as they were standing on the deck, apart.

"No!" he cried, with an oath, "I cannot trust the fellow; and besides, I do not wish him to brag that he or the weather has forced me to remit his punishment. That sail is gone, and we shall get right soon. Directly the carpenter comes down he shall give him the lashes. If he talks about murdering us, we must keep him in confinement."

The wind, meanwhile, having rather increased than otherwise, came round due north; and before the crew had arranged the sails, it set in from the north-east. The captain, who had not taken any observations for two days, was anxious as to his position as he saw night approaching, and dreaded the proximity of the reefs. He therefore commanded the men to put the ship about.

The prisoner was now really in the way; and the captain easily perceived, that under these circumstances, and while the storm continued to rage, the execution of a punishment would produce an unfavourable impression rather than deter his comrades from similar outbreaks. He therefore ordered the second mate, who had come on deck again, to unbind Hans, and to conduct him below until the weather should clear up.

The mate, a well-disposed man, seldom executed an order from his superior with greater pleasure. He quickly did as he was bid, and as he led Hans down, said, cheerily:

"Everything may yet go well, Hans. If we gain time, we gain everything; and when we enter the channel in safety, to-morrow, the governor will, perhaps, have forgotten all about this affair."

"I thank you for your kind wishes, mate," said the prisoner, as he threw himself, still downcast, upon the mattress which Jean, against the captain's order, had procured for him. The mate had but little time for consoling him, or entering into conversa-

tion. The roaring of the wind, the dashing of the waves, and the shouts of the crew, attracted his attention, and he soon found his way on deck.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STORM.

THE deck was cleared; and the ship, put on another tack, drove rapidly towards the south. Meanwhile night had come on, and it was very dark. The captain was sitting in the cabin drinking one glass of grog after another, angry at the bad weather, and at the failure in the execution of punishment upon the German, the mark of whose heavy hand still burned upon his forehead. The first mate who had the watch on deck paced to and fro, going occasionally into the cabin to consult with the captain as to the necessary steps to be taken.

The chart of the Torres Straits, with compass and rule, was lying displayed on the table of the cabin. The mate perceived with extreme displeasure what an unlucky day the captain had chosen for drowning his reason in brandy.

"At midnight we will go upon the other tack," said Captain Oilytt, who was reclining on the corner of the sofa, with his right leg drawn up.

"Midnight might be a little too early, captain," said the mate; "I was up at the masthead before it got dark, and though I won't speak positively, yet I thought I saw land to the west. Besides, you know that the stream carries us here very fast towards the reefs, and it would be an awkward affair if we should run on them in the dark."

"Nonsense," grumbled the captain, as he filled his glass again, "at day-break we shall just be at the right

distance to enter the channel at noon; and then that fellow Hans is to have his due, the scoundrel."

"Captain Oilytt," said the mate, quietly, "were I in your place I would let that matter rest until we have got safely through Torres Straits. It is not wise to create ill-will among the crew. Afterwards, if you are still in the same mind, you can carry out your sentence. He certainly will not run away, and to be kept in irons is no joke either."

"Nonsense!" cried the captain, starting up angrily. "Do you think I am to go about in the sight of the whole crew with a bandaged face, and not punish the rascal who dared to lay hands upon me? A plague upon it! Besides, there is something more in that fellow than you imagine. I shipped him, in the first instance, from Sydney, last year, and then he hardly spoke a single word of English. Yet, last night, hang it, he rattled away as if he had never spoken a word of any other language. He cannot have picked it up so quickly here on board ship. Consequently he has concealed his knowledge of English, and in that there must be something wrong. I should not wonder if he turned out to be a runaway convict from New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land. I wish I had had a suspicion of that before."

"Well, I must confess that his speaking English so well all at once last night, struck me too as being very odd," said the mate, musing; "but what earthly reason could he have had for hiding it?"

"His body is covered with scars," continued the captain, filling another glass. "I should like to know where he got them—surely not in honourable warfare; for he is not old enough to have been in any serious war. I have a suspicion that I have seen his grey cat's eyes somewhere before."

"Was he ever in India?" asked the mate.

"In India?" said Oilytt; "he did not get his tattooing in India. It is common amongst the tribes

of the Pacific. I wonder in what kind of places he has rambled about."

Having made this speech the captain filled another glass, which he kept stirring in an impatient way. The mate, disgusted with his suspicious and senseless rage, left the cabin. The captain continued musing and fretting; the scars on the body of the sailor evidently provoked his high displeasure. That man must have seen more than he wished to relate, and seemed quite capable of carrying out his threats.

"The deuce take him!" he muttered to himself, "he shall not be able to boast that he first struck and then frightened William Oilytt, Captain of the *Boreas*. To-morrow morning, if all be well, he shall have his fifty lashes in spite of his scars. The mutinous dog! I'll give his skin another tattooing; and then he may look out, and try how he'll keep his word, confined as he shall be, in his iron cage. A plague upon his rebellious soul." With these words he drew his other leg on the sofa, as if he intended to have a nap.

Placing the cushion under his head he called for the steward, once in his usual voice, and the second time in the shrill tones of anger. He had entirely forgotten that the steward was confined to his berth. In his place appeared Timor, the Malay boy. He stood in the door-way awaiting the captain's orders.

"Where is that lazy scamp, the steward?" cried the worthy commander. "Gone to sleep already. Oh, I forgot he has got a sore side! Let him look out that I don't give him a sore back into the bargain. Timor! Timor!"

"I am here, sir," said the boy, stepping up to the sofa.

"Timor, call me at midnight—do you hear?"

"Yes, sir." The boy remained standing for some minutes to see whether his master had any further orders. He knew well enough that the captain expected a large amount of attention and respect. He had, however, fallen fast asleep, and Timor retreated to follow the example if circumstances would permit.

With little sail, and against a heavy sea, the ship made but slow progress. Although, according to their course, they were leaving the land, the second mate, who had the watch until midnight, thought proper several times to send men aloft to see whether nothing was to be discovered to the west. The sky was, however, too much clouded, and the darkness impenetrable. In this manner midnight approached.

Timor, mindful of his duty, tried to arouse his master from his sleep, and had to use the most violent efforts to wake him. Suddenly he jumped up on both feet at once, rubbed his eyes, and looked for the compass that hung over him. Then for about five minutes he continued sitting on the sofa, as if lost in deep thought. Probably he was thinking over what had been going on for the last few hours; and with a sudden "I see," he stood up, looked at the jug, which he found empty, and not over-satisfied with that, he went on deck.

The wind still blew from the same quarter. The sea ran high, the waves beat furiously, and the night was dreary. The first mate also had just appeared on deck. He had put on his thick coat, and was buttoning it up to the neck.

"Good morning, captain," he said, as he passed his superior. "The prospect does not improve. Things look bad enough still."

"Good morning, Mr. Black; I think with sunrise we shall get into calm water again. The sky looks as if it were breaking. Are the men on deck —eh, Bill?" As he said this he turned to the man who had just been relieved from the wheel, and then continued, "Don't go below yet, we will put the ship about."

This manœuvre which, with a well-manned ship, does not occupy many minutes, took a great deal of time with the small number on board; and while it was being executed the *Boreas* shipped a heavy sea, and took a great deal of water on board.

"Captain Oilytt," said the mate, when the ship was all right again, and slowly struggling against the waves, making about three knots per hour, "I really do not think it will be safe to keep on this tack until four o'clock. According to our calculations we are not very far from the coast. But we have not taken proper observations for two days, and this is a very dangerous part."

"Come down with me, and let us compare our notes with the chart," said Captain Oilytt, descending to the cabin.

According to their calculation they were yet at a considerable distance from the reefs; and with the little progress the ship was making, no particular danger was to be dreaded for the few remaining hours of the night. Yet the mate kept shaking his head, observing that it might still be desirable to take measures for their safety.

"Very well; call me at two o'clock," said the captain, ill-humouredly, and stretched himself on the sofa, intending to doze away the intervening hour and a half.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CORAL REEF.

The mate came down at the appointed time, compared with the chart the distance they had made according to the calculation furnished by log and compass, and found that they had come nearer to the coast by about five miles. He then went upon deck with the captain, and a man was sent aloft to look out. Not a sign of land or of breakers could be seen; and the captain stayed on deck during the remainder of the watch. They did not, however, alter the course of the ship. At four o'clock the first mate went below, and on arousing the second mate, tried to impress particu-

larly on his mind the necessity of keeping a good look-out. Not only breakers, but land was to be feared, and every precaution ought to be adopted. The night was so dark that they might rely much more on their sense of hearing than on that of seeing. The first mate then went to his berth; but he could not sleep, and turned about restlessly, starting up every minute, and listening with great anxiety.

At about four o'clock in the morning he thought he could detect the dull and hollow sound of breakers borne on a sudden gust of wind. At a bound he sprang out of his berth and ran on deck. For a moment everything was quiet. Then again a groaning, rattling, thundering sound was heard quite plainly coming over the stormy sea, mingled with the howling of the wind.

"Captain Oilytt, we are near the coast," exclaimed the man, in terror, running up hastily towards the captain, who was anxiously pacing up and down the quarter-deck.

"Nonsense, sir; what makes you think so?" asked the captain, halting suddenly.

"Did you hear nothing?" said the mate, listening. For about half a minute nothing could be discerned, but then the hollow menacing sounds were borne to the ears of both so plainly that the matter could be no longer doubted.

"I hear the breakers here on the forecastle," said Jean, who was standing at the bow, and had been listening in that direction; "it's just over there."

"He is right!" exclaimed the mate. "We are in the midst of the shoals."

"All hands on deck," shouted the captain, in a thundering voice, without making any other reply. "Quick, boys, quick! Rouse up those sleepers out of their cabins. Shake the reefs out of the topsails. Quick, boys!"

Other orders were given, and the necessary measures taken to save the ship from destruction.

The men rushed up, half dressed, from their berths,

and began to execute the orders given. The large sails were set, and the ship moved more rapidly through the water.

"Everything is in order, sir," cried the first mate to whom the captain addressed a question respecting the management of the ship.

Their only safety lay in the possibility of getting away from the coast, or rather the shoals, which stretch along for many miles; and every effort was made to get more sail upon the ship. They endeavoured to set another large sail, and the crew were engaged in the work; while the captain, full of anxiety, bent forward, listening to the roar from the breakers, and endeavoured in the increasing light of dawn to descry the whole line of foam, which calculating distance from the plainness with which the sound was heard, must be visible. One of the men had been sent aloft to facilitate the operations for setting the other sail, and he was also ordered to look in the direction whence the sound proceeded.

"Captain Oilytt," said the mate, stepping up to him, "we have not enough men. Shall I fetch Hans up from below?"

"No," said the captain, quickly. "You can manage without his aid. I won't have him." But, he added after a minute or two of consideration, "do as you like; for if we should meet with a misfortune, the insurance company might make use of the circumstance against us, and try to avoid payment. Bring him up, and take off his irons. When we have got clear of the coast, we can carry out our sentence."

The carpenter was sent to bring up the prisoner; and the steward, meanwhile, was roused from his berth. Though he groaned, as if he suffered most dreadfully, he could not any longer evade his duty. He had hardly had time to cast a glance over the sea, and to catch the sound of the breakers, before he all at once appeared to be as well as ever he was; in fact, as if he had never

in his life been sick. He had been long enough at sea to perceive at a glance the desperate state of affairs.

When Hans came upon deck, he looked sharply out over the sea, almost immediately his ear caught the hollow roar of the breakers now plainly audible; and a slight, almost triumphant smile passed over his pale features.

"Take off his irons, carpenter," said the first mate, quickly, as if afraid that the captain might change his mind again, "and then quick to work, my lad. We are all of us working to-day on our own account, for everybody who does not want to have his throat full of seawater must put his best foot forward. Be brisk with that sail, boys; why, you are an eternity about it."

"Mr. Black," said Hans, who was not yet free, "before I lift a finger to assist in working this ship out of the present peril, I wish, in the first place, to know whether the captain means to remit the sentence of corporal punishment passed upon me. If he does, he shall not find on board a more willing labourer; and he may afterwards put me in irons again, if he thinks fit. If, however, he will not remit that punishment, then the ship may run aground upon the reefs, for what I care. I, for my part, would prefer being drowned to being flogged."

"That's nonsense, man," returned the mate. "Don't trouble yourself about that; be glad of the chance of saving your own life, and your shipmates too. First let us get off the coast, all the rest may be settled afterwards."

"What—does that obstinate dog mean to make any objections?" yelled the captain, who had overheard their conversation. Springing forward, he seized a handspike, and, before anybody could interfere, he dealt Hans, who was standing before him defenceless, and with fetters upon his limbs, such a heavy blow that the man fell to the ground, senseless. William and Carl were about to run towards him, to help him

up again. The captain prevented them, and told them to attend to their own work, and not to stir to the aid of the wounded sailor; he then threw the handspike down upon the deck, telling Timor to get the body out of the way.

Mr. Black, rough enough in many things, but by no means approving of such wanton cruelty, did not wait for any orders from his captain; he called the sailor nearest to him, who happened to be Bill, to take the senseless man up, and to place him on the hay in the part of the ship where the horses were stowed. It was impossible at that moment to do anything further for the poor fellow.

The captain perceived what was going on; but as Mr. Black had taken part in these proceedings of sympathy, and seemed quite resolved not to be put down, he offered no objection.

The sail had meanwhile been reefed on deck, and the sailors were engaged fixing it upon the yard. After much labour the sail was hoisted, and the vessel quickened her course.

It was fortunate for the ship that the wind went down with the dawn of day, otherwise she could not have carried so much sail. As it was, the tackle was stretched to the utmost degree, and the strong masts bent almost double, and it seemed as if a little additional pressure would snap them asunder like laths.

Mr. Black, meanwhile, had himself gone aloft, and his cry of "Breakers on the lee-bow!" soon brought the captain to his side.

"There are the reefs, sir," said the mate. As he spoke he pointed with his right hand to a white foaming crest of high surging waves.

"Don't you see the main-land?" asked the captain. "If we could only make out the tower of Baines' Island in an hour we should be safe."

"It is too misty," was the reply; "there is beyond the breakers a thick fog on the water. I can make

out nothing distinctly. I do not think that we can get away, captain."

"Let us try more sail," replied the other, anxiously surveying the threatening line of coast, or rather of islands. We *must* weather this point, if we can."

"The masts won't bear it, captain," said the mate; they're old, and we shall have them by the board in a minute."

"We *must* make sail; we really shan't be able even so much as to clear the southern extremity of these reefs; and if we are driven in that direction, we shall be lost, without a chance of rescue. We shall lose more by it than can be made good again in a full watch."

The order was accordingly given, and one of the men—it was a German, Carl—went up to set the sail. As the canvas was unfurled the mast creaked, and Carl looked round in dismay.

"Down with you! down!" cried the mate to him, giving him a sign with his hand to induce him to stoop. The roar of the wind drowned his words, and Carl, without heeding, continued his work.

"Come along," cried the mate, gliding down himself, and running towards the captain, at the top of his speed. Carl did not hear the warning voice. The terrible noise around caused him to lose his presence of mind: he seized the first rope he could lay hold of, and he fell.

"Man overboard!" cried Jean, from the wheel, above the noise of the breaking mast and the roar of the sea.

As if impelled by instinct, William hastened up from the cabin, and catching hold of a rope lying on the quarter-deck, threw it just over the sailor's head; but it was in vain. The power of grasping at it and holding fast had left his relaxed muscles. In falling, he must have knocked his head against something, for his forehead, as William anxiously watched him, showed a gaping wound. The waves closed over the unfortunate man, and he sank into the deep.

All this was the work of a single moment. Close to William the top-mast fell down, just across one of the two boats, which were suspended on each side of the deck. The sailor did not even hear it. His eager glance was fixed upon the sinking corpse of his comrade. When he looked round again the ship was a wreck. The three masts had gone. Immediately the vessel, relieved of the immense weight of canvas, righted; she had, however, shipped an enormous quantity of water. The rigging, which with yards and masts was now dragging alongside, impeded her course, and she did not make the slightest advance towards escape. She was carried by the strong current straight towards the reefs.

"Clear the wreck, lads," cried the mate; and setting a good example, he seized a heavy axe. The crew worked resolutely, and the fallen masts and rigging were speedily cut adrift. Everything that impeded the progress of the ship was thrown overboard. In spite of this, they no longer hoped to save the *Boreas*. The only resource was to find, if possible, a place where she might take the ground in calm water. The captain managed to get across the deck, and stood leaning on the stump of the foremast. He ordered the man at the helm to change the direction of the ship. The order was immediately obeyed, and the vessel drifted towards the foaming breakers.

The crew were all upon deck, scarcely daring to draw their breath. Stretched out before them lay what seemed a solid and continuous line of reefs, towards which the ship was driving before the wind at the rate of several knots an hour. As soon as she touched the ground the fury of the next wave would be their ruin; and the eddies and whirlpools caused by the rushing of the waters amongst the sharp coral rocks seemed to put off all hope of saving life. Further orders were given to the helmsman, but little could be effected in this extremity.

Jean stood at the wheel His face was deadly pale,

but an almost scornful smile played around his lips as he repeated the orders given, in token of their being understood, and put in execution.

The breakers were now roaring so violently, and so close at hand, that the spray almost reached the deck. At every moment the crew expected the shock that they feared would bring destruction upon them and their ship. Not a word was spoken; and for three or four minutes the crew remained almost motionless, as if they had been panic-stricken. In fact, they stood like men looking death in the face.

Hans seemed to be entirely forgotten. All stood in peril of instant death, and the fate of others was forgotten in their own desperate need.

The captain gave another order to the helmsman. His voice sounded strangely above the howling of the storm and the roaring of the breakers. Right and left of the ship the waves rose and towered up, breaking upon the coral reefs beside them; and the ship was borne upon their crests with a horrible swiftness.

"Hard a-port!" cried the captain, in a loud tone of voice, that could be heard even above the raging of the elements.

While the order was repeated and executed—and the mate himself lent his assistance at the wheel—Captain Oilytt glided quickly along the deck, as if intending to regain the quarter-deck. The ship's bow had hardly answered her helm, when a dreadful blow shook every timber from stem to stern, vibrating down to the very keel. The concussion brought down everything that had been left standing, and a quantity of tackle and lumber that had got adrift were swept into the foaming waves around.

The terror-stricken mariners awaited another shock, fearing that it must seal the fate of the unhappy ship. Anxiously did they dread lest each moment should be their last; yet the shock did *not* come.

The large waves of the boisterous sea kept rushing

towards the ship, but they did not reach her. That same bristling coral reef which before had threatened them with ruin, on a sudden became an impenetrable barrier between them and the raging waves.

The crew hardly dared to breathe, and for many minutes each man remained in his place. It seemed as if they could not bring themselves to believe in their deliverance. William was the first to spring up to the wheel and proclaim with a loud shout of joy their safety.

"We have gone clean over the ridge!" he cried to the others. "This is the pleasantest haven I have seen all my life long."

These words dissolved the alarm; and each man endeavoured to get a fair view of their position, and to calculate the chances of an ultimate escape.

The ship had actually run in between two high coral reefs, through a passage which perhaps was not much larger than the vessel herself.

The smooth water in which she now lay, and into which they had, as if by magic, been guided, appeared hardly three yards broad. On each side, the reefs hemmed it in, and on these the sea broke furiously. There was no other passage to be seen, as far as the eye could reach. It was only the desperate nature of their situation which could have induced the captain to steer his ship along this narrow channel, which, after all, might have concealed a reef. They were actually lying in the midst of circular reefs, in a little basin hardly a hundred paces long. The water was of a yellowish green colour, in which the coral reefs at the bottom could be clearly and distinctly seen.

Nothing was to be seen on every side but coral reefs. In most places they rose up close to the surface. The coral reefs, however, could be of no great width, for close behind them might be seen the deep, blue water. It was greatly agitated by the strong wind, against which it had no protection.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WRECK.

THE first thing to be done was to endeavour to ascertain whether any chance of escape remained. If they could manage to get their large boat afloat, there would not be the slightest difficulty in entering the regular passage through Torres Straits. In that case, they might make for one of the small islands in that locality, unless some other ship bound from Sydney to British India should pass that way and take them on board. It was the season in which the voyage was generally made; and Captain Oilytt himself was acquainted with the captains of several ships who intended to follow him in a week or a fortnight.

The attention of the crew was suddenly diverted even from the consideration of their own position, serious as it was, by strange sounds that seemed to rise from below. They all hastened down to ascertain the cause of this noise. There was, in fact, no immediate necessity for attending to the position of the ship. At that particular moment, she was lying safe enough between the coral reefs; and even had she drifted, the anchors might easily have been let go in order to render her quite fast and secure.

The noise proceeded, as we before said, from below, and was caused by the poor horses. Of course, the ship had sprung a leak, and the water rushed in upon the poor animals. They were, as we have already said, but slightly fastened; and they began to struggle with all their might to get away. But the water gained rapidly upon them, and when one of the poor creatures got his head above the surface his snorting might be heard, accompanied sometimes by a dreadful cry of anguish. These terrible lamentations made even the rough

men shudder. It was, however, impossible to render aid. Had they even been able to cut the halters by which the horses were fastened, there were no means of getting the animals on deck; and below, the water poured in with awful rapidity.

Jean, indeed, hastened down, more for the sake of quieting his mind, than with any idea of the possibility of assisting. At that moment the ladder gave way, probably broken by a blow from one of the animals which had succeeded in freeing itself. Jean was just able to catch hold of a rope that hung near, and thus to save himself from instant destruction. Had he fallen, he would, probably, have gone under the hoofs of the desperate animals, and would soon have been trodden to death. As he turned to see what was going on below, and to contemplate the narrow escape he had had, he heard a voice at his side, enquiring in faint tones:

"Jean, what is the matter with the ship?"

"Hans, is that you?" exclaimed the young Frenchman, hastening towards his comrade. "Poor fellow! how are you? For the last hour we have had our hands, or rather our eyes and ears, so full, that really no man could think of anything but himself. How you are bleeding! How do you feel?"

"Better, much better; but what has happened to the ship?" said the wounded man.

"Oh, she is riding quite comfortable and snug between the coral reefs," said Jean, laughing. The immediate danger having passed away, he had recovered his usual cheerfulness. "Masts overboard, all three of them, and we are as safely in port as ever a brave ship was after a long voyage. That poor fellow, Charles, fell overboard," he added, with a graver tone.

"I wish I was in his place," said Hans, closing his eyes and falling back upon the hay.

"Nonsense," said Jean, again; "your sufferings are now at an end. Who knows whether, after all, it has not been a precious lucky thing for us that we have got

this old tub of ours on solid ground to rest a bit. That scoundrel of a captain may now look out for another ship. For my part, I shall certainly not sail again with him — that much is certain. Confound it, you are still in irons! Now, that won't do; they must be taken off. The water is rising rapidly. How still and quiet all is now down there!" he added, with a shudder.

"Jean," shouted the mate from above, "what are you doing down there?"

"Coming," replied the sailor; and turning again to Hans, he said, in a consolatory tone, "I shall return presently. Don't be afraid, we will make it all right."

On regaining the deck, he found the necessary measures in progress for launching the long-boat, an operation rendered rather difficult by the diminished number of the crew. Jean took the opportunity of a pause in the operations to ask Mr. Black to procure the liberation of Hans. "Poor fellow," said Jean, "he is still lying wounded below, and must not be left there much longer if his life is to be saved." Mr. Black mentioned the subject to the captain, who would not, however, listen to any representations. "As long," said he, "as I am master on board this ship, the scoundrel shall remain in irons. He resisted my authority, and threatened death to any one who should attempt to execute the punishment to which I sentenced him. That is nothing less than open and unmitigated mutiny, and I do not mean to expose myself to the danger of being murdered." With these words, he turned away and gave some orders to the crew.

"But," the mate remonstrated, "you cannot take him into the long-boat in his irons; he would only be in the way; and besides, I am not sure whether you will be able afterwards to justify such conduct."

"Justify!" cried the captain, with a sneer. "Who told you that I have any intention of taking him into the long-boat with the other men? I do not dream of such

a thing, nor do I intend to have any further trouble with that rebellious scoundrel."

"Surely, you don't mean to leave him behind in a state of utter helplessness?" exclaimed the mate, in amazement.

"Helplessness?" rejoined Captain Oilytt. "Can he be called helpless? I leave him in full possession of the ship, and there is the *jolly-boat*, which he may take if he does not like to stay any longer where he is. What more can he want?"

"That really won't do, Captain Oilytt," the mate exclaimed, shaking his head.

"You will see presently," replied the captain, with a smile. "I shall do as I wish. Where there's a will, there's a way. Indeed, that fellow ought to be very thankful that I do not take him with me to the nearest port and have him hanged. That is what the mutinous rascal deserves. I should certainly not let him off if I saw any probability of my returning to Sydney. The vessels with which we are most likely to come in contact, and on which, therefore, we must place our hopes, are bound for Batavia, and with the Dutch government I want to have nothing to do. We once picked a bone, and did not separate good friends."

"At any rate, I shall take his irons off and examine his wound," said the mate, turning about to carry out his intentions.

"Stop," said the captain, catching hold of his arm. "Not before I give you permission to do so, if you please. The wound may be dressed without setting free. Here's the key of the medicine chest, and you'll be so kind as to attend to that. The thick-headed scoundrel would not die, if we were to leave him to himself. But he shall wear the irons until we leave the ship."

The mate made no further objection, but went down to the cabin to fetch the necessary remedies. He also put some in his pocket, intending to leave them with

Hans. He then went to his patient, whom he found much better than he expected.

Meanwhile the work on deck proceeded quickly enough. Provisions were stowed away, and the captain secured his instruments, his charts, the compass, and his papers. He divided among his crew the fire-arms that were found on board, together with the necessary ammunition. This measure of precaution was not altogether uncalled for. In the islands in these straits natives are frequently encountered who are not very friendly in their communications with strangers. These matters being arranged, the long-boat was launched.

These labours consumed the best portion of the day; and as evening approached, all hope of getting away that day vanished. At noon, when the sun shone clear and bright in the heavens, the captain had taken his observations in order to ascertain their position. He found that they had gone ashore about thirty miles above Baines' Island. This assured him that he could reach the southern extremity of the straits, which was most frequented. There were, consequently, no grounds for apprehension. Moreover, they might eke out their small stock of provisions by fishing. The chief precaution was to take in a sufficient quantity of fresh water. They might easily enough make for any of the little islands near the straits, such as *Booby Island*, at which place several English vessels left stores for shipwrecked mariners. The sails were also stored in the long-boat, which was now repaired and provided with every necessary. Things were all got ready, and with the dawn of next morning they resolved to proceed on their exploring voyage.

The sailors meanwhile attended to their own personal affairs, packing up their most necessary articles in their blankets. There was not room for any more luggage, such as chests, &c. All their packages were put in a single chest, and they were soon ready. Jean,

François, and William, kept back their small bundles. The chest, they observed, was quite full, and there would be room in the long-boat for their small bundles. In fact, the three seemed to have some plan in their heads.

When evening set in, the men wanted to have some private conversation, but the carpenter, who seldom remained in their cabin, would not stir. Jean, François, and William therefore interchanged signs, and went on deck.

A few words were sufficient to settle their plan. They were firmly resolved not to leave Hans alone and helpless on board the wreck, with a boat with which he could do little or nothing; they, therefore, determined to remain with him. They were confirmed in this view by the strong desire they all felt to return to Sydney, a course they preferred to a trip with the captain to India on board some other vessel. Their fancy also revelled in the delights of a journey along the coast. They did not know the country; they were ignorant of the dangers of such an expedition; but this mattered not.

Before joining their comrades, they decided to say nothing that evening of their project, but to leave the announcement until the morrow.

CHAPTER XIV.

DIVISION OF THE CREW.

THE next morning, at break of day, the mate aroused the men. An hour afterwards, the last meal they were to take on board ship was over, and the crew were ready to start.

Jean managed during the morning to exchange a few words with his confederates. He had also visited Hans during the night, and had taken down for his

use a mattress and a blanket. At the same time he communicated the plan which he and his two friends had formed, and combated the objections made by the generous sailor, who did not wish to expose others to danger on his account.

Jean climbed up as far as he was able, in order to get a good view of the sea upon which they were about to venture in a frail boat. Timor, the little Malay, glided to him cautiously, so as not to be observed, and said,

"Tuwan Jean, I heard yesterday you intend to stay with Tuwan Hans. Will you take me with you? I can row well, and will be quite obedient."

"My boy, I would take you with the greatest possible pleasure, if it depended on me. You must ask the captain, as I am only answerable for myself, and must not interfere with any of his crew."

"The captain won't let me stay," said the boy sadly, shaking his head. "He has made me put my things into the boat."

"I can't help it, Timor," replied Jean. "I am sorry, as I should have been glad of your company."

"Is that true?" asked the boy, his eyes sparkling with joy.

"Certainly," replied Jean. "Let us see—how can we manage it?"

"Timor," shouted the captain at that moment, "what are you doing over there, you good-for-nothing fellow? Quick!—here are some things to be carried into the long-boat. You can stay with them till we start. What's the matter now, eh?"

"Who's to stay behind with Tuwan Hans, captain?" asked the boy timidly, glancing sideways at his master.

"Is the boy mad?" cried the captain in a rage. "How dare you ask that question, you dark-skinned animal? Only let me hear another syllable from you, and I will tattoo your brown skin for you with blue and red stripes. Quick!—get the things on board, and sit down in the stern, and do not stir. Are all the bottles I gave you last night in the boat?"

"Saya, Tuwan," muttered the boy in a fright, and set about fulfilling the orders of his stern master. As he had received some rather severe chastisement at the captain's hands, the boy thought it would be prudent not to incur the risk of another dose.

The sailors were soon after summoned to embark. The captain stood ready to leave the ship. All his things, the provisions and water were in the boat, and Timor had just taken down the last chest, containing charts and compasses, which they might find useful in making out the islands. The first mate had gone down to knock the irons off Hans, and to announce the captain's determination with respect to him. Jean, Bill, and François then stepped forward, and told the captain that they intended to remain with Hans, and make an effort to reach some port by means of the little boat. Hans was too weak, they said, to do anything himself, and they did not wish to leave him to starve.

The captain burst into a terrible rage, and ordered them to go at once into the long-boat. Bill, who was the spokesman, kept perfectly cool, and gave him plainly to understand that, the ship being a wreck, the men were entitled to provide for their safety as they thought best.

Captain Oilytt perceived that his officers were not in the least degree inclined to assist in supporting former authority. In fact, they showed unmistakeable signs of approbation of the men's conduct. He therefore soon became aware that he could not alter the resolution of his men, and at last told them plainly that they might go to the devil, if they pleased. He vowed, however, that they should give up their arms and ammunition, which he declared belonged to the ship.

"Give up the guns?" cried William, drawing back. "Do you wish us to be murdered by the savages? That is too bad. The guns you say belong to the ship—but where are our wages? Why, you might just give us the guns on account of our little bills."

"You scoundrels!" cried the captain, furiously—"you assert that wages are due to you!—you dare to demand money of me! Why, you are in my debt for the expense to which I was put for catching you at Sydney. Do you think your hostess does such service gratis?"

"Oh, I see—it's Mr. MacCarthy, then, who played us that trick," said Bill, with a laugh. "Well, it's all the same now. As for the guns, we shall most certainly keep them. Even if I we're hauled up afterwards, I would rather be locked up for six weeks on shore, than be caught and eaten up by the savages in these parts; and that's the long and short of the matter."

The mate whispered a few words to the captain; the latter, for a moment, paused and hesitated. The three armed men quietly returned his angry and malicious looks, and the others, who were still on deck, stepped up to them and shook hands with them, in token of a cordial understanding. So the captain thought it wiser to yield; and turning round with a curse, he was about to quit the ship, when suddenly a fall and a splash in the water were heard. A shrill cry for help followed. Those who stood near rushed to the hatchway and looked down between decks, now full of water, where nothing but a straw hat was visible.

"Surely it was Hans!" cried Jean, terrified. "He has fallen into the water."

"No, it cannot be Hans, for I only just now carried him into a place of safety," said the first mate; "and I took off his irons. When I left him, he was busy with his chest."

"Where is Timor?" cried the captain, looking into the boat, and missing the boy. "Where is Timor?" he repeated, eagerly.

"A few seconds ago he was lying there," said the steward, pointing to the spot where he had last seen the boy.

"Timor!" the captain cried again, and in a tone

which seemed to indicate that a reply was sure to follow, so unwilling was he to admit that the poor little creature might have been drowned.

"Timor! where is the fellow?" he added, looking round.

Jean making up his mind quickly, as he usually did, had already placed everything which he carried in the hands of his friend Bill, who stood near him, and gliding along, he disappeared through the hatchway. For a moment he rested on the lower deck, and then disappeared in the water, just where the bubbles were still rising.

All stood, in speechless amazement, around the opening, looking into the water with which the ship was filled. Every feeling but anxiety for the safety of their comrades was forgotten, and each one watched with painful intensity the eddies that marked the spot where the sailor had disappeared.

After a painful pause, "By heavens!" exclaimed François, in a voice nearly stifled by anguish; "by heavens, he will rise no more! Jean—for Heaven's sake—Jean!—"

"There he is!" exclaimed several of the men at once; and they felt as if a load had been removed from their bosoms. So great had been their anxiety that they had scarcely breathed during the last few moments.

The dark locks of the young Frenchman, generally glossy and curly, first became visible, and then his deadly pale face appeared above the water; with one stroke of the arm he reached the ladder, and placing his foot on one of the steps, he raised himself out of the water as high as his shoulders. He was alone.

"Can't you find him, Jean!" cried the first mate imploringly. "Surely he cannot have been washed away so suddenly. Dear me, that boy can swim like a fish; he must have struck his head against something."

Jean made no reply, but a second time disappeared under the water, and on this occasion re-

mained much longer than on the first. When at last he re-appeared, he quickly regained the deck, and opened his bundle in silence in order to change his dripping garments.

"Poor boy," said the mate in a low tone, as he walked to the boat after the captain, who had turned away abruptly in an ill humour.

The steward, who was sitting down beside the carpenter, muttered to himself, "Such a thing never happened before in my experience. I never heard of anybody drowning himself in a ship. I verily think that little imp of mischief has done this on purpose to play me a trick, so that I may have to do all the work myself."

In a few minutes the boat was ready for starting.

"Good-bye, comrades!" cried Bob and Jim to their fellows, waving their hands.

"Push off," said the captain, angrily, annoyed at these signs of good-will. "Take your seats," he continued, "and be ready to use the oars."

Jack, the invalid, was lying upon his mattress in the forepart of the boat. He was still very weak, and looked pale, though the fever seemed to have left him. In seeking to render his accommodation better and to put him in a more comfortable position, some time was necessarily lost. The captain did not seem to like these delays, but his officers persisted, and he probably thought that under the circumstances it would be better not to interfere.

The tempest of the day before had entirely ceased. The air was clear and the day bright. A slight east wind promised them a rapid passage to Booby Island. The force of the current alone, without the aid of the light breeze, bore them quickly from the wreck. Before they had gone twenty yards, a loud shout attracted the attention of all. The captain, who looked up at the noise, turned deadly pale; for his eye caught sight of Hans, holding in his hands a short double-barrelled gun, which glittered in the sun.

"Murderer!" cried the frightened captain, almost involuntarily. The word reached the ears of his former victim.

Hans shook his head with a contemptuous smile, and said, pointing the muzzle of the gun towards the deck: "Don't be afraid, Captain Oilytt, I shall not retaliate for your last cowardly assault in the manner you suppose. If I had been flogged, you would now be a dead man; but as for the blow you gave me whilst I was in irons, I will settle that with you some other time. *We shall meet again.*"

With these words, he turned quietly away from the boat, whose sails had by this time begun to fill, and to bear it quickly through the green waters.

As he turned his back to the boat, and stood face to face with his comrades, he noticed that Jean and William suddenly, and as if in terror, sprang nimbly aside. At the same moment he heard a bullet whistle over his head. With the quickness of lightning he turned round again, and raised his own rifle to his shoulder; but a glance at the boat convinced him that by seeking to take revenge he must necessarily endanger the lives of the innocent crew. He put his gun down again, and waving his cap as a signal that he was not hurt, called to the captain scornfully—

"Thank you, captain! That, too, I will put down to your account. We shall meet again, be sure of that."

The captain, he perceived, endeavoured to take aim at him with another musket, at his side. The first mate interfered, and in five minutes the boat was beyond the reach of a gun, and half an hour later was scarcely visible.

The sailors remained on deck a few minutes before commencing their preparations. Each man stood lost in thought, looking at the vanishing boat; nor did they cease to gaze so long as they could distinguish the figures in the sheets. At length she appeared but a speck upon the water Hans held out

his hand to Jean, William, and François, thanking them for the true friendship they had shown him.

"Nonsense, man," replied Jean, with a laugh; "it is pure selfishness on our part. We did not want to go to India with the skipper. I wish to return to Sydney, and that's the reason we have remained here, all three of us, to try to make our way by land."

Hans shook his head as if in doubt, saying gravely, "Jean, Jean, you are mistaken, all three of you! I fear you do not know the nature of the country through which you will have to travel. I told you so last night. I don't think we must even dare to attempt such a journey, if we do not mean to expose ourselves to the greatest danger. The blacks who infest these parts of the coast are a bloodthirsty race."

"Nonsense! Why should we hold back?" said Jean with his usual carelessness. "Four resolute men, well armed, have no cause for fear. If one of those fellows takes a fancy to roasting or boiling my carcass, he will find it precious tough. Heaven be praised that we have got rid of the skipper and his hangers-on! I am not afraid of anything now. Let us set to work at once, and get our little craft ready, and in an hour we may be off. I am only sorry that the poor boy was drowned this morning. He would have been a useful companion."

Jean had hardly spoken the words when he gave a start up, as if he had been bitten by an adder; for close at his feet, from the hatchway, there issued a voice that drove his blood back from his face to his heart.

"Tuwan Jean! Tuwan Jean! is captain gone?" and the next moment the little Malay, nimble as a kitten, climbed upon the deck. He gazed round at first hurriedly, and with a frightened look. His large black eyes suddenly lighted up with joy, as he saw afar off the sail of the distant boat. Breaking out into a loud merry laugh, he ran about the deck like a mad man.

Hans, who was not aware of what had happened

with respect to Timor, could not understand why the others had been so much startled at the appearance of the boy. Jean was the first to recover from his amazement, and cried in comical anger,

"Look at this little dusky rascal. He is as dry as a powder magazine, and he let me dive down among the dead horses twice to try to fish him out. I really don't know whether I oughtn't to send him head over heels into the hold—just to let him try how he likes swimming about in the dark amongst the dead animals—the little heathen!"

Timor knew well enough that he should not be hurt by any of those who remained upon the deck. He laughed so heartily that the tears filled his eyes. Jean and François joined him with right good-will, whilst the boy declared that he would on no account have gone any more with that "old, ugly captain." He also explained how perplexed he had been for a means of escape.

"You were all of you busy—you quarrel about who stay here, and who go off away in long-boat," continued the lad in his broken English, "and Timor saw that nobody did think at all of him, and Timor glided down with little nail-cask—Timor got little nail-cask all ready early in the morning. Let it fall down into the water; it make fearful splash. I threw straw-hat after it; and then, I cry out very loud, crept in between two big truss of hay, and hide away in so far that captain nor nobody else find me, even if they look after me for an hour. There I stayed till I hear Jean say that boat had pushed off. So here I am, and Timor will stay with you and go with you." Having concluded, he sat down quietly on one of the water-casks.

Hans remarked with a laugh that the little rogue had no need to be afraid with regard to their decision, for he knew right well that they would not leave him behind. He was desired to pack up whatever things he wanted to take with him, and then

to help them in getting the boat ready, and shipping their provisions and the necessary fresh water. The breeze freshened, and they hoped when once afloat soon to reach a safe landing-place.

CHAPTER XV.

THE VOYAGE IN THE BOAT.

TIMOR, who had been used to wait in the cabin, and therefore understood something of cookery and the management of stores, was of great service to the men. The steward, in order to leave them as little as possible, had either taken into the long-boat or destroyed all the pickles, biscuits, wine, and liquors. The cabin was afloat with brandy and wine; and it seemed that on going down for the last time the selfish fellow had smashed all the bottles within his reach.

His trouble was, however, in vain. Timor was well acquainted with all the nooks, corners, and secret places, and in a short time brought forth more than enough provisions of all kinds to fill three such boats as theirs. A selection was made of the best, and a good stock of water laid in, in small spirit-kegs. These things served as ballast. One of the chests, filled with the most necessary wearing apparel, was also put on board; and by eleven o'clock they had launched their little boat.

It was in fact the captain's gig. Though not much used in Sydney, the ship having been moored almost close to the shore, she took in but little water, and after she had been afloat about an hour was perfectly water tight. Soon afterwards, everything and everybody were ready for a start.

"All ready!" cried William, pushing off from the wreck.

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shoal they found
channel. They were
to float gently
narrow passage. Hans
a fresh obstacle, and

the speed of the boat was slackened. After various narrow escapes they at last managed to get clear of all impediments. Turning round with a smile to William for his ready obedience to orders and dexterous management of the helm, Hans gave the welcome cry of "All right."

"Well done; now, François, up with the sail," he continued, "for at last we are safe."

"I thought Hans made me go about ziz-zag fashion with a vengeance," cried Bill, who had been rather puzzled by the various orders. "Are we clear of the danger at last?"

"Yes, we have entered Torres Straits in safety," returned Hans, in more cheerful tones than usual. "When I was here last," he added, "I did not think I should return in such a cockle-shell as this."

"Did you ever pass this way before?" William asked, in astonishment.

"This is the fifth time, man; so you could not have a better pilot. If the captain had been reasonable, he would not have lost his ship. It is better, however, as it is. Now that we are fairly afloat we shall soon make the land, or, what is better, perhaps get on board some other good ship, and make a voyage in her. Should things not turn out as we expect, we can without risk run before the *monsoon*, even in this little cockle-shell. At this season I should not mind going in a canoe to Batavia or Singapore."

"Hans," interposed William, who had been listening to him for some moments with astonishment, "I was just going to ask you—but the deuce!—in what direction are we steering? That rascal of a captain has not even left us a compass. Hanged if I can tell what to do."

"I have one," said Hans, untying his neckerchief, from which hung a little delicately-worked compass, inlaid with gold. "You may use this one, and return it to me when you have done with it. I am sure it will answer every purpose."

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... days, but I hope on

a more agreeable occasion, he will be coming out with good English. I dare say he can speak the language well enough. However, let each man do as he pleases; no doubt all will come right in the end. Let us drink to a quick and prosperous voyage!"

As he said this, he brought forth a bottle of port wine, which he said he had brought from the ship on his own account and for this especial purpose. After taking a good draught he passed the bottle round. Even Timor was not forgotten.

They had now fairly entered that wonderful region which seems to be neither sea nor land, but a strange mixture of both. Sometimes they appeared to sail over unfathomable deeps, at others, as if they were skimming along, with the quickness of ligtning, over a beautiful country. It did not require a very vivid imagination to picture forests, streams, even towns, spread out like a panorama below. They glided along with astonishing rapidity. When they suddenly came into deeper water, it appeared as if a dark cloud had interposed itself between them and the fairy scenes beneath the surface.

"One gets quite giddy looking down," said Jean, breaking a pause in which each of the men had been occupied with his own thoughts. "It looks just as if we were skimming along over a beautiful landscape lit up by the moon. Look, Bill, here the scenery shifts again. There is a wood, now a deep valley."

William, thus invited, put his head over the side, and enjoying his quid, said, laughing,

"These are only coral fields. There is scarcely three fathoms' depth of water, and what you fancy to be fields and hills are nothing, after all, but coral. Bless you—a forest and valleys! the man is raving. Take another pull at the bottle—it will do you a great deal of good."

It was evident that William was not of a romantic turn; he had not much poetry in his composition, and

liked to deal with realities. At his curt reply Jean smiled and winked to Hans; and William, who noticed it, said, good-humouredly,

"Laugh away, lads!—it's all the same to me. We have real salt water under us and corals all around, and the sooner we get away from them the better. Perhaps we shall not manage that quite so easily as we think, or even not at all; and that will be disagreeable. This much is certain—whether they are real or not, I can only say I hope that none of us will have to rest among them, that's all."

With these words he held the bottle up, in order to see how much of the wine was left, and then put it to his lips, and emptied it at a draught. Having done this, he made an involuntary movement, as if he intended to throw it overboard, but suddenly changing his mind, put the bottle back into its place. "Stop," he said, "I can throw it away at any time; and who knows whether it may not be of some use to us yet?"

As they glided before a steady breeze over the slightly agitated water they gradually drew away from the wreck. It seemed like a speck on the horizon. In the west small dark rocks began to rise, like islands among the coral reefs.

"There to the left is the land, if I am not much mistaken," said William, after sailing for several hours in almost unbroken silence, no conversation having taken place but what referred to the navigation of their frail craft.

"I should not wonder if that was the main land; and we must do our best to reach it as soon as possible."

"If you are inclined to be gobbled up, or at least to have some slices cut out of any superfluous fat you may have about you, you may go on shore in these parts of Australia," said Hans. "I should have thought it more prudent to go on shore first on one of the islands, and there to open a council of war. We shall not go far out of our way, nor lose much time. Moreover, we shall have to reconnoitre. That, Bill, can hardly be

the coast of Australia; it is Hendrick's Island, I warrant, that rises in the form of a pinnacle."

"So it does," said William, standing on one of the seats, and shading his eyes from the rays of the sun with his right hand. "I can only make out that single peak. I guess you are right. Stop a moment—I think I make out more land to the right. We had better wait a little, Hans, and determine upon our course."

"I really don't see," observed Jean, "why we cannot hold our consultation and arrive at our decision as well here in the boat as upon any of those little patches of sand that you call the islands. We have nothing else to do now, and the sooner we settle upon a fixed plan the better."

"Very good," replied Hans. "Are you really determined to try to get to Sydney by the land route?"

"I am," cried Bill, decidedly. "I should think that was no longer a matter of doubt. All we have to think about is the quickest way of reaching the land."

"You really do not understand the nature of the country you mean to wander through. I am quite ready to join you in the attempt, if you are determined. Let me, however, tell you that we shall never penetrate fifty miles into the interior—that much is certain. We shall find no water, and very little to eat. We may also consider ourselves lucky if the blackies allow us to regain the coast."

"Then what on earth are we to do?" asked William, rather startled at this unexpected intelligence. "I really had not thought of any other way of getting out of this mess. It appears to me that no resource is left us but to follow the skipper, and to be picked up perhaps by the same ship. If so, I cannot imagine why we should, in the first place, have left the captain and quarrelled with him."

"I, for one, am not of the same opinion," replied Hans, without hesitation; "I mean to select my own ship, and will not be picked up by the first comer. I

do not much mind landing on the coast. In fact, I am rather anxious to explore this part of the continent. If we do not perceive a reasonable chance of escape, then let us put to sea again, and follow the *monsoon*. By the help of this current we shall have no difficulty in making the Indian Archipelago, and may perhaps land on Timor Island. In that case we should be certain of an excellent guide and interpreter in the person of our little friend here."

"Agreed!" exclaimed Jean. "It would be strange if four stout fellows—and Timor may be reckoned half a man—should not be able to make their way in the world. Cheer up, and steer to the south, Hans. We are losing valuable time, and I am anxious to learn what kind of reception we are likely to meet with on the coast."

"Do you agree, François?" asked Hans, looking at him.

François did not understand English very well, but he seemed to make out the meaning of what had been agreed upon, and nodding his head, said in French, "I will do as you do, comrades;" and added cheerfully, "wherever you go I will follow; and as for those savages, I think we need not be afraid of them. We are well armed;—and firearms are a novelty in these parts, and consequently will produce an uncommon effect."

"What does he say?" asked William, looking at him curiously.

"Go a-head," replied Hans, with a laugh, as with a slight bend of the arm he changed the course of their small craft. "I think we shall soon make the coast."

"What horrible gibberish that French lingo is!" said Bill, shaking his head. "I have been among French people for such a length of time, and yet have never been able to pick up more than a few words, such as *Merci*, *Monshure* and *s'il woo plaze*. They sound like broad Irish. It is strange," he continued, pursuing his whimsical philological remarks, "that if

we English people catch up a few words of French, we always stumble upon such civil speeches, and that the first thing a Frenchman learns of English is an oath. Now, I should like to know how this happens. If I, for instance, try to be polite, it's like teaching a cat to swim. We are not accustomed to it, and not made for it."

"The real meaning of what strikes you," said Hans, with a smile, "rests entirely in the circumstance that you English are so much given to swearing and cursing, and that the French have such an extraordinary stock of polite phrases on hand. It is natural people should pick up that which they hear most of."

"Hem!" muttered William, "that's just possible. It never struck me before." And he relapsed into his musings on language in general.

Timor took no part in the conversation; yet his eyes sparkled when he perceived the possibility of regaining his longed-for native land, from which he had been separated for some time. He, however, did not give himself up to reveries. He got ready his fishing-tackle, which he was very fond of using when on board the *Boreas*, and which he had taken care to stow safely away in their frail craft; he commenced his fishing operations by putting a piece of red cloth on a pretty strong hook, and dragging it after the boat, at a distance of about ten yards.

The wind made the heavily-laden boat lean over on one side, and it was with some difficulty that the men managed to preserve the balance. The three needle-like points of the Hannibal Islands became visible to the south-west. In the afternoon the wind died away, and they were compelled to ply the oars in order to gain a little sandbank, the edge of which they could see glittering at a distance of about two miles. On arriving they cast anchor. Timor had caught a fish, but in their preparations nobody had thought of putting a little firewood into the boat; and as nothing of the kind was to be found on this sandbank—not so

much as a blade of grass—they had to sup on provisions taken from the ship, and to keep the fish for the morrow.

They passed the night in the boat, each watching in turn. There was, however, no cause of anxiety. The night was warm and quiet, and only towards morning a light breeze from the east arose; when Hans, whose turn it was to keep watch, raised the light anchor, set the sail, and the boat glided gently along over the surface. When the others awoke they were not a little astonished to find themselves afloat again, and the sandbank far behind.

The wind was light all day long. Twice they had to cast anchor; and on the second evening they had, not without a good deal of exertion, reached the northernmost of the Hannibal Islands. It seemed but a small speck to be called by so grand a name. It is only a small rock, on which a few shrubs and bushes grow. Our voyagers anchored on the lee-side and slept again in their boat. They went on shore in the evening, collected some dry firewood, and broiled some dainty fish, which Timor had caught during the day.

Hans, indeed, did not like their kindling a fire, although in so doing they adopted every precaution. It was lighted as far out of sight as possible, that it might not be seen inland. Yet the smoke curling up into the calm air might betray them to any roving savages. William would not listen to objections, saying that even if any of the Indians perceived the smoke, they were quite as likely to suppose that it proceeded from some of their own people as from white men. He declared that, if they began by taking such unnecessary precautions, they would not be able to move at all with the least comfort. Nor did he think that it would fare very well with them in the presence of real danger, if they were thus afraid when there was none. The fish were accordingly broiled, and the dish gave general satisfaction.

The next morning the wind blew strongly from the

shore, and it was nearly ten o'clock before they raised the anchor, and set sail. The coast of Australia became more and more plainly visible. They could already distinguish the low bushy brushwood that grew upon the shore. No traces of human beings were discovered anywhere on the whole sandy beach, nor was smoke seen rising in any direction. This part of the country seemed to be uninhabited. Hans, who was again at the rudder, asked William to hand him the little telescope that was lying at his side.

"If we do not fall in with any savages," he said, after having surveyed the land with the telescope, "it is likely enough that we shall not find water. Will you take the glass, Bill?"

"*Merci*," replied the other, drily, declining, and in the one word exhausting a large portion of his stock of French; "if there was any brandy in the glass, it would be welcome. As it is, I do not care about it. I can't tell how it is: I am not, generally speaking, an awkward fellow; but I never could manage these things properly; and whenever I look through a telescope, all objects seem to float about before my eyes. Pretty much the same thing occurs with fire-arms. I certainly *can* pull the trigger, of course; but as to taking aim, that is beyond me, and the bullet goes in whatever direction it pleases. Do you see anything, Hans?"

"Nothing at all, so far as a human being is concerned," replied the other, handing the glass to Jean. "So much the better; we can very soon examine the country, and come to some decision as to our route."

Towards evening the wind died away again, and they had to make use of their oars. The water was too deep to allow of their casting anchor. By sunset they were within a few yards of the shore, in four fathoms water; and in this spot they resolved to pass the night. They did not exactly wish to land on an unknown coast, as it was getting dark.

"I wonder what animals are found in these parts," said Jean, when they had cast their anchor, taken in

their sail, and laid out their supper on two wine-casks, the bottoms of which formed a kind of table. "Does nobody know anything about them?"

"The first person who ventured into the interior of this continent," replied Hans, "and to whom we are indebted for trustworthy information, which is very scanty, after all, was a German by birth—one Dr. Leichhardt. With a few companions as bold and enterprising as himself, he visited this coast, and penetrated some distance to the west. According to his account, the animals are quite different from those found in Southern Australia. On the northern coast there are said to be crocodiles and buffaloes. Whether we shall find them so far to the east I don't know. At any rate, there we shall meet with kangaroos, and they will furnish our sole means of subsistence in the interior of the country. In the first place, you must gain some knowledge of the country by making a personal inspection. And if you do not then abandon your plan of penetrating into the interior, you will be the first sailors or fishermen who did not grow sick of dry land and sigh once more for salt water."

"Nonsense," Jean replied, with a laugh, "I shall feel thankful for the least chance of getting fairly out of the reach of salt water. I, for one, have chosen Australia as my future home, and the sooner I reach Sydney again the better. Nobody will catch me at sea again."

As Jean was talking Hans had taken up the telescope. He scanned the coast as well as the increasing darkness would allow: nothing suspicious was to be seen. Having satisfied himself on this score, he finished his supper. The watch was duly fixed, and the rest of the men, one by one, fell off to sleep. Hans had the first watch, Jean the second, François the third, and William the morning watch. Timor was allowed to sleep the whole night.

When his companions had laid themselves down and made themselves as comfortable as circumstances would allow, Hans again examined his gun, put fresh caps on,

and placed it carefully at his side, ready for immediate use. Then he put his blanket, rolled up tightly, under his head, and, leaning back, gazed vacantly at the soft clouds and the bright twinkling stars. He occasionally started up as he thought he heard some distant noise. It proved, however, only the splash in the water of some fish or the shrill cry of some night bird.

Our watcher was not able to detect six dark forms that glided quietly and stealthily through the brush-wood. They passed along almost as swiftly as the deer in their forests, and kept approaching more closely to the eastern shore; they took care not to tread upon the white and smooth sand. Had Hans seen them he would not have passed the hours of his watch in such pleasant castle-building, nor at the end of it have laid down to sleep with such a tranquil and cheerful mind. Images of the past flitted through his brain, and the hours of his watch glided by as if they had been so many minutes.

Jean was the happy possessor of a chronometer—the only instrument of the kind on board—which consequently passed from one to another at each change of the watch. The first three watches passed tranquilly enough; and when William, roused by François, awoke, Hans, Jean, and Timor were sleeping as soundly as the wearied traveller in his snug hotel.

"Halloa!" cried William, rubbing his eyes. "What! two o'clock already. I thought I had only just laid down. It's getting quite cold in the mornings."

"It's almost three o'clock, man," replied François, "and all's right." Saying these words he handed the chronometer over to William, who was entrusted with the further guardianship of the small craft and her crew. Wrapping himself up in his blanket, and stretching his legs on the nearest form, William prepared for a smoke. He had been too long in Australia not to have acquired a taste for a pipe, a thing sailors do not care much for, provided they have their quid. He first buttoned his thick pilot jacket close round the throat,

for the morning air blew sharply from the east across the water. He then cut some pigtail into small shreds, filled his pipe, and struck a light. The latter operation was not accomplished until after many unsuccessful attempts, both damp and wind interfering with its success. William lost his temper—at least apparently so—at this little annoyance, and got a light just as he had exhausted his budget of oaths. With crossed legs he then reclined against the little mast, looking with the imperturbability of an experienced watchman for any intruder upon his tranquillity.

CHAPTER XVI.

A MORNING VISIT.

THE noise made by William in striking a light roused Timor. He raised himself up for a moment; but finding the morning air too fresh, he cast a glance at the shore stretching out before them, and wrapped himself up in his blanket again.

William knew well that, as it was his watch, it was his business to keep awake. He also understood that he must look out sharply; but he had not a very distinct idea as to whither he ought to direct his attention. They had not perceived any canoes on the previous evening; and even if there were any savages on shore, it would not have been an easy matter for them to find the boat in the dark. At any rate they could not approach without causing a good deal of noise; and for these reasons he felt perfectly at his ease.

The appearance of the weather, too, was favourable. Though here and there clouds were gathering in the sky, yet they merely betokened occasional showers, and not a heavy rain or a storm. Moreover, their boat was in quite a sheltered position, and they had no reason to entertain any apprehensions. The watch,

therefore, seemed likely to pass over as well as the former ones had done, and without any accident. Nevertheless, William took up his position in such a manner as to be able to command a complete view of the sea between him and the shore. Reclining in an easy fashion, he puffed his smoke into the fresh morning air.

In this manner four o'clock drew near. William had commenced his third pipe, and in the east the first grey dawn of day was visible. The difficulties under which William laboured in striking a light had not decreased. Timor who had slept well all night, and moreover was accustomed to rise on board ship about this time, in order to make the coffee, was again aroused by William's attempts to obtain fire, and rising from his hard couch asked in an undertone, so as not to disturb the others,

"What's the time, Tuwan Bill? Is it getting day already? It must be early still."

William not being a man of many words, except in urgent cases, pointed with his pipe towards the east, and said, "Coming."

Timor followed the gesture, and gazed at the eastern horizon, watching the gradual approach of day. All at once he raised himself somewhat higher, put out his right arm, rubbed his eyes, and looked intently at the water. He then grasped William's knee, and pressing it gently,

"Tuwan Bill," he whispered, but so noiselessly that the sound hardly reached the sailor's ear. "What do I see here? Are they fish?"

William turned his head in the direction in which the little Malay pointed, and saw at that very moment a dark object rising out of the water. It appeared about a foot above the surface, glided along for a yard or two, and again disappeared.

"Porpoises!" said Bill, in his usual loud voice, thus showing that there was no ground for alarm. He repeated the word as the same movement was seen

several times at different places. "They are fish, Timor; but we cannot at present have anything to do with them. One of them could easily carry us away, anchor, and all." He resumed his former position, and quietly went on smoking, while Timor kept his attention fixed to the spot in which the movement had been observed. The objects were again visible after a short interval, a little nearer to the boat, at a spot where the seaweed had collected, forming a full dark mass. It was not yet light enough to make out what the supposed porpoises really were.

We shall, perhaps, render matters plainer if we call the reader's attention to the manner in which the boat was anchored. The Australian coast, off the northern shores of which the boat was lying, stretched from east to west, and thus formed the southern bank of Torres Straits. The prevailing wind was at that time of the year from the east; and the stream, little influenced by the ebb and flow of the tides, ran with a strong current towards the west. The little boat rode at anchor, with her bow pointed directly to the east. One side of the boat, consequently, lay opposite to the land.

Timor, who was stretched out in the bow, began to shiver, for the morning air was pretty keen; and in order to warm himself he again wrapped the blanket round his limbs. The strange objects which had attracted his attention were still present to him, and before he laid down again he cast a searching glance towards the seaweeds, in which direction they had last disappeared. The grey stripe of light in the east had, meanwhile, become a little broader, without, however, rendering the water and the objects around plain to the spectator. By the aid of this dim light Timor thought that he saw something moving in that direction. He sprang suddenly on the bench, and looked intently out before him.

"These are not porpoises I am sure," he muttered to himself in the Malay tongue. "They are either turtles,

or something of that kind; and they will, perhaps, come near enough to enable us to catch one with a harpoon."

The harpoon was lying in the middle of the boat with the point under a seat in the stern. In order to get at this the little fellow had to climb over François, and while lifting it out he grazed Hans, who was immediately aroused. Hans quickly started up, asking what was the matter?

"Oh, nothing!" replied the Malay boy, in an undertone. "Tuwan Hans may lie down again; I was only going to get harpoon, and touched good Hans—stupid Timor. There are fish, and they may by chance pass near the boat."

"What kind of fish?" said Hans, stroking the hair from his face, and putting on his cap that had fallen off during the night.

"Ah! Timor doesn't know; I can only see them moving," replied Timor. "They seem to be playing about the boat, and Timor thought perhaps one of them might come near." Timor spoke as usual to Hans in his own language, and therefore louder than he was wont to do to the others.

Hans got upon his legs, and cast a look around. He glanced at the clouds, whose edges were being lightened up, and at the coast which was as yet dark. Timor, who believed he was looking for the fish, pointed with his arm towards the lump of seaweed, now perfectly motionless. The seaweed was about sixty paces from them.

"There was something moving more towards the land," said Hans, whose eyes had involuntarily followed the direction which Timor's arm pointed out to him. "That must have been a very large fish, indeed, and I really do not think it possible that fish of that size would venture so near the land. Be very careful, Timor, not to strike at such a monster if he should happen to come near to you; for either he would pull you overboard, or we shall never see our harpoon again,

and it is the only one we possess. Stop; there he is again! He wants to pass between us and the land."

The fish—if fish it really was—dived, and swam under water. He did not come to the surface again, at least not in Hans' and Timor's sight. The noise of the conversation had by this time aroused François, who drew himself up, wishing the others good morning.

"What is that?" he cried suddenly in French, holding out his arm. "Fish!"

"No, certainly not!" cried Hans, turning his head quickly in the direction in which the noise of splashing was distinctly heard. "These are not fish; that's a native, and yet I did not see anybody going into the water."

"Where?" cried Bill, suddenly jumping up; Jean, too, awoke.

William had taken his telescope, and turned towards the swimming object that was now no longer to be mistaken. It was certainly a black, who was swimming about, and diving from time to time about sixty paces from their boat. As he observed that the eyes of all the men in the boat were directed towards him, he rose as far as he could from the water, and called out some words to them.

What he meant they could not of course understand. Hans, however, in order at least to let him know that he was observed, returned some answer, very much at random, in some South Australian dialect, which he could hardly presume would be understood by the Indian. Almost all the Australian tribes have a peculiar language of their own.

"Come nearer to us!" he cried. The native, as if catching his meaning, swam a few strokes nearer, and then called out again, apparently doubtful how to act.

At the same moment other heads became visible on the north side—that is, on the one furthest from the land. After a few seconds they dived again. They had merely risen for the purpose of taking breath, and were not more than thirty paces from the boat. The

ntion of the sailors was completely engaged by a cry
ed by the first-mentioned savage. They did not
what was passing behind them.
It would be a capital idea to make friends with
a fellow," said Hans, turning to Jean; "he would
f great service to us on land. Let us at least
e the attempt." The savage uttered some strange
ds.
Who can understand that language?" muttered
s; "I can't make out one word of it."
lose to the boat, but on the opposite side, a swarthy
l was raised, and two jet-black eyes looked eagerly
t the strange scene. Another head suddenly ap-
ed, then a third. The men in the boat could
heard them breathe, so close were they. But our
ds' attention was still directed to the first men-
ed native, with whom they thought it so desirable,
ssible, to make friends.
Let us hold out a flag of truce to him as a sign of
l-will," said Jean. "That's about the only means
e of making him understand that we have not
e with hostile intentions."
Hans uttered some words to him in an inviting tone.
n kept waving a piece of linen intended for a flag.
Diable!" cried François, drawing his knife from
sheath, which, like his comrades, he carried at his
. In the act of turning round, at this unexpected
on, Hans lost his balance, and fell to starboard
n both hands on the edge of the boat.
ive misshapen forms were by this time hanging
n the side, and lifting themselves as high as they
d out of the water, trying by their weight to upset
swamp the boat.
he lurch caused by the sudden jerk sent Jean over-
rd. Fortunately, however, he was able to catch
l of the gunwale of their little craft. Thus he not
r kept himself afloat, but probably also, by in some
sure restoring the balance, prevented the Indians
n effecting their purpose. Of course the boat

shipped a quantity of water before she recovered herself.

Such another shock would certainly have proved fatal; and it seemed as if the Indians intended to make another attempt, for they kept their position. William, however, saved them this time, and that quite involuntarily. The first shock threw him off his legs, and he tumbled backwards in the bows. In endeavouring to regain his equilibrium, his finger touched the trigger of the gun; and off it went, the bullet whistling through the air.

The report had a miraculous effect. In an instant the six savages uttered a yelling cry, and their dark heads disappeared in indescribable dismay beneath the waves. In their rapid flight they almost effected the object which they had in vain endeavoured to accomplish. They let go their hold so precipitately as to make the boat give a violent lurch, and our wanderers feared she would fill and go down. Jean, who was still overboard, happily maintained his hold, and although the craft did not upset, it was very nearly swamped. The boat, however, had righted itself on the surface of the water, and the danger was over for the moment.

Jean scrambled into the boat as quickly as possible, by the assistance of Timor; Hans seized his gun and and cocked it; while François, keeping his knife in his hand, watched narrowly for any other hand that might be placed on the edge of the boat. No trace of the fugitives was seen. Hans observed, in astonishment, that they could not, after all, be a kind of mermen, relations of Barnum's celebrated mermaid, and that, consequently, they must rise above water again. Timor pointed to the mass of seaweed, close to which they had before observed what they then supposed to be fish disporting in the waves. Their eyes turned naturally in that direction. François, however, kept watching the edge of the boat, apparently expecting every moment to see another black hand laid upon it.

"There they are!" cried Hans. Jean raised his gun, and aimed at the dark spot, which might be recognised plainly as formed by the heads of their enemies. Hans interfered, observing calmly that it would be better to avoid shedding blood until no other resource remained.

The heads disappeared almost instantaneously, and when they again emerged from the water were out of the range of a gun; when they showed themselves for the third time, it was close to the shore. Soon after, six black forms, with short lances in their hands, as Hans could plainly observe by aid of his telescope, jumped upon the dry land, and immediately disappeared among the thick brushwood, which entirely concealed them from the gaze of our friends.

The attention of the sailors was immediately directed to their boat. Two of them set about baling the water out, while the others remained upon the watch. They did not deem it probable that such an attack would have been made by so small a number of men, and, consequently, feared that some more savages were lurking about.

Their plan was not a bad one, and would most likely have succeeded, but for one circumstance, of which of course the savages must have been ignorant; this was, that a ship's boat, on account of its flat bottom, rests much more firmly on the surface of the water than the canoes with which they are familiar. No canoe would have been able to resist such a weight suddenly thrown on one side. The crew once overboard would certainly have laboured under great disadvantages compared with the Australians, who are almost as active in the water as they are on shore. They would either have killed the sailors with their short lances, or they would have held them under water and drowned them. The boat with its cargo, which they could easily have raised from the bottom of the water by diving, would have been an easy prize.

Their former manœuvres were now easily under-

stood. In the first place, they had endeavoured, in the dim light of early dawn, to swim to the boat. Nearly all savage tribes make their attacks at that time of day. Timor's awaking frustrated their plan, and, the right moment once lost, their chance was not so good. One of them, therefore, swam back again a good distance, in order to divert the attention of the sailors from his associates. By this stratagem they were enabled to dive, to swim under water towards the canoe, and to put their plan into operation. The tribes who have as yet had little connexion with white men, stand in wholesome dread of firearms. The report of William's musket, quite accidental as the discharge was, frightened them to such a degree that they abandoned the attack, and looked only to their own safety.

"Well, how do you like our reception among the blacks?" asked Hans, when they had put their boat in order again, and were making preparations for a hasty breakfast. "Are they not a hospitable set? They do not even wait until we get on shore, but pay us a morning call without ceremony."

"Confound the whole pack of lubbers!" said William, grumbling. "Why, they are a set of water-dogs; the brutes can swim and dive."

"Half of our bread all wet," Timor reported, as the result of his examination of the state of their provisions. "Lucky most of the bread we packed right away all safe."

"We will eat the wet bread first," said Jean with imperturbable good humour. "Even if bread does taste a little of salt water, it is not very much the worse for that; and I see that it is not quite spoiled. Now, ships' biscuit would have had to remain in water a little longer before it would have been soft. I see now, for the first time, what I could never perceive before, how much superior biscuit is to bread. Only think of those sly, sneaking wretches! While endeavouring to make us believe in their friendship, some of the band actually tried to murder us. And what

cowards the fellows are! Oh, how they did run away when Bill fired his gun amongst them. He did us all good service. I only wonder how Bill had his wits about him, so as to fire at once. The attack came so suddenly that I, for one, did not even think of my gun."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LANDING.

WILLIAM looked at him in a comical manner, and the others laughed.

"Well," said William at last, "if I always fire my musket in the same manner, I shall certainly run the risk of hurting myself more than anybody else. I have not only taken all the skin off my shins against the sharp corners of the chest and other things, but I've got a blow from this precious gun of mine, which, in going off, knocked against my poor body with such a rap that I really thought I had killed myself instead of the niggers. These guns are strange weapons; it's almost as dangerous to stand behind them as it is before them. I had but a handful of powder in the barrel. You need not laugh so dreadfully. Our situation is anything but pleasant, after all, and I cannot see any fun. You had better try and find a means of escape from this precious place. Now, what is the first thing to be done?"

"Sail, ho!" cried Timor. While occupied with his work he had kept his eye upon the horizon.

This cry, of course, turned the thoughts of the sailors in quite another direction. All eyes were bent with the swiftness of lightning to the only quarter in which a sail could possibly appear; namely, the entrance to the Torres Straits. Sure enough, just above the horizon the sails of a ship were visible. She seemed to

be a vessel of considerable size. She must have ent the straits the evening before, and cast anchor. voured by a light breeze, and by the strong stre that was setting towards the west, she had commen her course through the straits.

"Here is a fine opportunity for getting away," sa Hans with a smile, as they stood silently watching t progress of the ship. "What think you, Bill; sha we try our luck?"

William shook his head doubtfully, and, after pause, replied,

"No! though I very much wish to be off, Captain Oilytt's company is too good for me; I am not worthy of the honour, and I do not mean to intrude upon him again. If another ship comes up, well and good; but as for this first vessel, I think we should leave her at our worthy captain's disposal."

"If there was no other objection," said Jean, "that would not prevent me. On a strange ship he has no power, for he would be regarded as a passenger, and we should help the crew and keep watch. What could he do to us?"

"What could he do to us?" repeated William. "Why, nothing more, man, than have us all put in irons for mutiny; that is to say, if he felt so inclined. Should he be better disposed, you may rely upon it that he would give us such a character to the captain, that I'd much rather be sent for seven years to Norfolk Island, or Van Diemen's Land, than remain on board. Only ask Hans what he thinks about it. And what would become of poor little Timor for his fun at playing hide and seek? Why, I verily believe they would do their worst even upon him."

"Nonsense, man!" replied Jean, "I shall not think of looking for that sweet Captain Oilytt's company. On the contrary, I thank Heaven that I have cut my connexion with him, even at the price it has cost. The appearance of this ship may be regarded as a piece of good luck. She will take the captain and

his companions out of the straits; and then, when another passes, if we do not like the life on shore, we shall be quite free to act as we please."

"Hallo, Hans! what are you doing?" he said, breaking off his argument and turning to his comrade, who deliberately walked forward and, without saying a word about the matter, was engaged getting up their little anchor.

"What am I doing? Why, setting us afloat," was the answer. "Do you mean to remain lying here all day?"

"Well, let us go on shore!" cried Jean, merrily, "and if we are pleased with the interior, all the savages of Australia shall not prevent our reaching our goal."

"I agree with your proposal," observed William; "but as for my gun, Timor may take that; I'll be hanged if I attempt to fire that thing again, or rather to assist in helping it to let itself off. What I know of the weapon as yet makes me think that it is rather independent, and does not ask whether its trigger is to be pulled or not."

The anchor was no sooner raised than William and François went to the oars, intending to row. Hans, however, set the sail, and suggested to his comrades that they should sail along the coast some distance, to a spot a little more elevated than the rest. It was more likely that they would find water among the hills; water certainly was the chief thing for them in their march to the interior. They might hope to get an occasional meal from any game that fell in their way, but they would not be able to get on without water.

"By this means, also, we shall get away from these accursed blacks," said William—"the rascals!"

"In that hope, I think, you will find yourself mistaken," said Hans; "for I am firmly convinced that all this time they have been watching us. They will follow us on land, and will be the more encouraged to do so by our sailing along the coast. If we sail straight to the

shore they are sure to be off, and I am certain that they will not attempt to molest us."

In about two hours they came off the higher land, and found, contrary to their expectations, the bed of a stream about thirty paces wide. Although but very little water was at present flowing in this channel, it was welcome to them. The rainy season, however, was setting in, and they might, therefore, calculate upon finding water even in the barren country; at any rate they stood a much better chance than in the summer, when even the spring-heads were dried up.

Though they imagined that they were pretty safe, yet they took every possible precaution. William, with the painter in hand, watched the moment when the boat touched the ground, and then, jumping out, drew it on shore. Jean and François, with loaded guns, stood at his side, and Hans held the rudder. No savages were to be seen; not even a footprint could be detected on the sand. They made a short reconnaissance, and dragged their boat into the little fresh-water creek which seemed to have been formed by the course of the little streamlet. For the first time since their unlucky adventure in Sydney they found themselves upon dry ground.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH.

François and Jean deemed it necessary to set a watch as soon as they had placed their boat in safety. Hans, who appeared to be somewhat more familiar with the habits of these tribes, allayed their apprehensions in this respect, assuring them that they certainly need not fear another surprise; after dark there might be more danger.

The next question was, what was to be done with

their boat? Was it to be left on shore, or concealed somewhere in the bush, while they attempted to find their way across the interior of the country? After a little consideration the plan was set aside as impracticable, and those who had been most eager for it seemed to have altered their minds; doubtless inspired by their recent adventure with a wholesome dread of such an enterprise.

Another difficult question connected with this matter was how the provisions were to be carried. To shoulder them seemed the only way. Hans gave them an idea of the distance, and William was quite crestfallen when he heard of a prospect of so many days' march. Even François and Jean caught the infection on tasting the nearest water, which they had taken to be a spring, but which turned out to be salt. This, indeed, was natural enough, for the entrance of the little creek or rivulet was exposed to the ebb and flow of the tide.

Hans' advice was exactly the same as it had been from the first—namely, to remain in their boat and to sail to the west, till they reached either Timor or some other island of that group. They had enough provisions to last them out, and as for water, they might trust to the chance of catching some in their sail whenever a shower or a thunder-storm came.

William and Timor agreed with this proposal, though from different motives. François and Jean could not overcome their repugnance to such a course, and still declared their desire to make for Sydney. They maintained that they would not at any rate leave the continent without seeing more of it; and they referred to the recent proof that had been afforded of the dread in which the Indians stood of their fire-arms. François, in particular, with that eagerness for hunting and the chase which sailors are wont to show when once they get on *terra firma*, protested solemnly that he would examine the country before he went to sea again. He had had enough for a while of the tedium of a sailor's life, and, at any rate, he would give his gun a trial.

The perils connected with such an expedition would increase rather than diminish its charm.

William, after all, entertained the least decided opinion, and was ready to join either party, provided that he was not to be required to make long marches with a heavy load upon his shoulders. He admitted that he had had other and more favourable views; and he agreed with Hans that the most desirable thing for them to do was to endeavour to reach Timor. On the other hand, he was not opposed to a little excursion into the interior, provided that he was not required to use his gun, for only in the last extremity would he consent to handle the kicking monster. "But what," he cried, as he wound up his speech, "is to become of the boat meanwhile?" This was, of course, an important question. Although François had at first thought that it might easily be concealed somewhere, yet he soon felt persuaded, from a glance at the ground, that such a plan was more easily conceived than executed. It was essential to their safety that their boat should be secured; as, if they lost that last resource, they would be exposed, not only to the almost inevitable danger of losing their whole stock of provisions, but also of having all possibility of retreat cut off.

Hans offered to remain with Timor in the boat until his three comrades should have satisfied their whim of living on land, and should have seen enough of the interior, which he hoped would be before long. Timor quite coincided, but Jean did not like the plan. He wished to have Hans with him, and proposed William, as the worst walker amongst them, as the proper guardian of the boat. He might take up his station on a little island, which at high tide was just above the water, and seemed to be overgrown with thick brushwood. It was conveniently situated, about a mile from the land, so that they would have nothing to fear unless the natives came in canoes. This was not a probable contingency, at least during the daylight, as the savages would not easily recover from

the impression the discharge of the gun had made upon them.

William, never very sanguine, made no objection to this plan. It would leave him in sole possession of the boat, together with the port wine, for which he began to feel a tender regard. Hans also wished much to explore the country—a wish, however, to which he would not have thought of giving way if his companions had not displayed such eagerness for executing their plan. Conscious of his ability to get them out of many a scrape, he no longer opposed the expedition. Timor seemed to be quite agreeable to anything that did not expose him to the risk of falling into the hands of the savages, who had somewhat frightened him by the cunning as well as the suddenness of their attack.

They lost no more time in preparations. Every one took provisions and ammunition for two or three days. They agreed, moreover, on giving a signal of two shots, fired in quick succession, as soon as they returned. William, on hearing this signal, was to approach the land as cautiously as possible. He was at once ordered to leave the shore, to be quite secure from any sudden attack.

Before doing so, he took an affectionate leave of his companions, warning them seriously to keep a good look-out, and not to expose themselves to any unnecessary danger. He pressed them to take an extra bottle of Madeira. With the assistance of the rest, he pushed off the land. He then turned the bow of his little vessel to the sea, set the sail, and endeavoured, by Timor's aid, to reach the spot where he was to remain. The strong tide bore him rapidly away. No sooner had the three sailors seen him well afloat and under sail, than they shouldered their several packages, took their guns under their arms, and bent their steps towards the nearest hill, which they intended to climb first, in order to obtain a general survey of the neighbourhood.

Hans' leg still pained him. However, the last few

days of rest, and the friendly attendance of his comrades, had so far re-established his health that he was able to venture on such a journey without exposing himself to danger.

They walked for some time in the bed of the river, which branched off to east and west. Then they had to make their way across a swamp. They could hardly set their feet to the ground, as it gave way on every side. At last, however, they got clear of these obstacles and reached the higher and firmer ground.

Hans did not feel at his ease while working his way through this swamp. If the Indians had still entertained hostile intentions, and laid their plans accordingly, our friends would have been exposed to receive their attacks at every disadvantage. Their hands were not free for defence. Luckily, foes were not to be seen. Even the muddy ground, on which the traces could not have been effaced, showed no footprints. When they reached the first dry spot, and halted to breathe, François said, laughing, "I dare say the black rascals are still running away, so much did their unsuccessful attack on that morning frighten them;—particularly the report of William's gun."

Such, however, was not Hans' opinion. He made no remark, but kept looking about cautiously. He was further confirmed in his view when, on the border of a small thicket, they found, not only single foot-prints, but a regular beaten path, evidently the track of natives. He thought that it probably led to the end of the morass, and to the nearest spot where fresh water was to be obtained.

Here, on the first higher land, vegetation assumed a different character. This was indeed the case with the general appearance of the ground. The foliage was more luxuriant, and rows of trees crowned the ridge of the hill. The country they had seen before presented no other appearance than that of large heaps of land. Small, slender oasis-like patches of green stretched down towards the river, the banks of which were lined

with bushes. These, with various plants and trees, gave quite a pleasant character to the landscape. Towards the right, these palms were found to be still more numerous, and as they proceeded further they came to some larger thickets; where the savages seemed to have had regular camps. Both Hans and François felt ill at ease, in the thick underwood which completely swarmed with birds. The noise the birds made when disturbed seemed to increase their anxiety. For some time, at any interruption, they would halt and listen, to see if they could detect the sign of the approach of the natives, breaking in upon them with lance or club, from some place of concealment.

Such an unforeseen attack would not by any means have been impossible while they were entangled in the comparatively speaking flat ground, which offered no eminences whence they might see what was passing around, and where, consequently, an enemy might easily conceal his approach by the luxuriant vegetation. Our three travellers, impelled by some sort of instinct, and without even debating the point at all, directed their steps hastily towards the nearest hill. They soon came to an eminence entirely free from trees and bushes, and sparingly covered with turf and small red and yellow-coloured flowers. From this spot they might ascend higher without apprehension.

Their attention was attracted by several strange-looking pointed mounds, rising almost to the height of a man. The nature of these was at first inexplicable to them. From a distance, they might have been taken for trunks of trees. They covered the hill-side, sometimes standing in groups of two or three, sometimes as many as twenty or twenty-five together. They turned out, on closer examination, to be ant-hills, formed by an enormous kind of ant, similar to those known to inhabit certain regions of Southern Africa. These mounds were mostly eight or ten inches in diameter at their base; they were four feet high, terminating in a sharp point. They were made out of the

yellowish clay which gives such a singular character to the whole landscape. François, gifted, as we have before seen, with some imagination, at first thought that these were groups of light-coloured natives, who, spread about the hill, only awaited their coming nearer to fall upon them with all the advantages of a higher position. Hans, familiar with the appearance, explained the phenomenon, and his friends soon obtained proofs of the truth of his statement. His experience in this matter showed that he must have made some excursions in this or in neighbouring parts of the country.

Beyond these enterprising little ants, a kind of pigeon, hitherto unknown to them, seemed to be the only occupants of those places. They were of a darkish brown colour, marked with brighter spots. They had built their nests in the crevices of some protruding rocks, and they kept flying about as the strangers approached. The sailors had no wish to avail themselves of these opportunities for sport. In the first instance, they hoped to find something better than small birds, and they wished to avoid exciting the attention of the Indians by the reports of their guns. They, consequently, continued to climb up the hill without firing a single shot.

The mountain ridge grew steeper, and it took them some time to reach the summit. They were upon a ridge which stretched from north to south, and was bounded on the east by the higher mountain chain which ends in Cape York. Towards the west, they had before them a wide and green valley, encircled by the ocean. In neither direction did the country look promising. The greater part of the scene stretched out before them consisted of dried-up turf with occasional patches of bush and plains of dreary sand. Not the least indication of water was to be recognised. It was a gloomy wilderness which their imagination might be pleased to fill with the forms of treacherous savages.

"This is dreary," said François, breaking the long

pause during which they had been taking a survey of the wide, monotonous land before them. "How deserted, how dreadfully barren yonder wide plain looks! Here, among these hills, nature does not, indeed, wear her brightest aspect; but I can fancy that any one from the plain beneath may gaze up here with real longing."

"Across such a country you intend to try to make your way, without any of the means which might give anything like a chance of success to your journey," said Hans.

"It won't be like this everywhere," Jean replied quickly. "Look where that river is winding through yonder large valley. There is vegetation fresh and bountiful as ever a wanderer can wish, and if we follow this river——"

"We should very soon come to its source—and there all the dreary dulness of a desert would begin," Hans broke in with a shake of his head. "We must follow the example of that German whom I mentioned before—Dr. Leichhardt. He traversed this country under great difficulties and dangers. After having returned from his first expedition, he lost his life in the second. Furnished with every requisite for such an undertaking, and with the knowledge of the character and the general features of the country, the result of his first tour—full of as high a courage and perseverance as ever man possessed, he, nevertheless, perished miserably in the frightful deserts which form the interior of this extensive country. His bones may yet be whitening beside some salt-water spring, or be covered by the sand of the desert. I certainly am not in general much of a coward, but I feel afraid somehow every time I look at this mysterious country. In spite of all attempts at exploring the inland regions; in spite of numerous sacrifices, of courage regardless of danger and death, the attempts have all as yet failed, and who knows whether man will ever succeed?"

"On the other hand, there is a peculiar charm in

the idea of penetrating into what is, as yet, an untrodden wilderness," said Jean, who, leaning on his gun, had been gazing at the country to the south. "There is something within that impels us forward almost involuntarily; and such impulses become the stronger when beyond these barren plains lies the aim of our whole life."

"You are still thinking of that girl in the Golden Cross," said François; "but I don't know whether a few thousand miles of sand and salt water would not—I will not say *cool*, but rather dry up, the fiercest love. I, for my part, if I had a whole boarding-school of sweethearts waiting for me at Sydney, should not think of indulging my heart at the expense of my stomach and my throat."

"Why," said Jean, not without blushing, "you, François, have no idea of what real love is. It's the only power, I verily believe, capable of overcoming all such difficulties, which to sober reflection appear insurmountable."

"There is another feeling, Jean, and a mightier one to overcome such difficulties," replied Hans, "and that is *ambition*. It is certainly the strongest, but also the most dreadful power of which we are capable, and can only be surpassed, or rather surpass itself, when it is coupled with love. It leads us poor weak mortals on to victory and glory; but, alas! sometimes also to eternal perdition! I have, in my lifetime, seen examples of each—"

A wild and strange sound interrupted the conversation. All three raised their guns almost mechanically.

"Koo-eeh!" was heard from the wood that bordered the ridge.

"Koo-eeh!" re-echoed from two different places in the valley beneath.

"What kind of an animal was that?" asked François in an undertone, when the sounds and their echoes had died away. While asking the question, he remained in a listening position, bending his body for-

ward in the direction of the nearest patch of brushwood and trees.

"It proceeds, perhaps, from our friends of this morning," replied Hans, with a laugh, looking towards the wood in the direction whence the first sound had issued. "At any rate there are some natives near, for this is their cry. Perhaps it was meant as a kind of telegraphic despatch to announce to their comrades in the valley our safe arrival here."

"I see, we are travelling in the fashion of sovereigns and other great folks in Europe," said Jean, with a laugh, "who have every step they take and each meal they eat reported by the public papers; and of whom something more might now and then be reported, if these papers thought it safe. I must confess I do not much care just now for such celebrity. On the contrary, if I knew I could sustain the character, I should not mind painting myself black, and travelling altogether *incog.* as long as I remained in this country."

"Pray observe that on this ridge we are quite exposed to their attention and their tender mercies," said François, with a shake of his head. "They can watch our every movement, lying in ambush in some convenient corner, while we do not so much as dream of their proximity. I am only afraid they won't let Bill alone during our absence. This did not occur to me before; but it strikes me very forcibly now. Bill is a first-rate fellow in his way, and would not yield an inch of ground to Old Harry himself, so long as the meeting was quite an open one. But if they try any stratagems, I am much afraid he will not prove up to the mark."

"I thought of that, too," said Hans. "I comforted myself a little by the confidence I place in Timor. He, being half a savage himself, will be up to their tricks, and will not so easily be out-done in cunning. If you had not set your heart upon the trip, I should not have left the boat."

"Well, and I, for one, really begin to think we h done wrong," replied Jean, with a shake of his he "I do not mean you to understand that I have su denly given up my desire to make the attempt, ho ever desperate, of an overland journey towards th south. It would, however, after all have bee better to leave the boat altogether, and in no case t divide our forces. Moreover, I do not see clearly what we are after here. There is no need for us, as yet, to look out for provisions. On the contrary, it seems to me, that we are consuming more than we are likely to lay in. What we have seen of the country convinces me that it is not very inviting. It is, indeed, a barren wilderness, and I am of opinion that we had better try to get away as soon as we can. We shall reach the shore towards evening, hail our boat, and certainly sleep better and more securely on board than here. In this place one does not know from which direction these black scoundrels may be pleased to attack us."

"I quite agree with you," said François; "the sooner we are off here the better. I have already walked through the sole of one of my shoes in this sharp, stony ground; our shoes do very well to run about in on board ship, and to wash the captain's quarterdeck, but a journey on land is a very different thing. It sounds very well, while one is talking about it on board a snug craft, but the reality is not inviting. I am extremely pleased to think we have still the boat to fall back upon. Well, Hans, what do you say? what's the matter again?"

"There's not much need that I should tell you my opinion in detail," replied Hans, without taking his eyes off a certain spot near the border of the wood not far from them. "I was against the overland journey from the very beginning; and I knew well enough that you would soon be tired of your plan. I think we are going to have visitors again," he continued, holding out his arm in the direction in which

he had been looking. "There is something going on, —perhaps an expedition not quite ready to start. We are at least spared the trouble of trying to keep our whereabouts a secret, for I am fully persuaded that we are watched closely enough from all sides."

"Kooh-eeh!" sounded again from the wood.

Hans was just raising his hand to his mouth to repeat the cry, in order to mislead the enemy, or to draw them out of their hiding-places, when, not a little to their surprise, the cry was repeated close behind them in a bend of the hill. It was uttered aloud, and in so careless a manner, that it was evident the person who shouted knew no more of their presence in this particular spot, than they had been aware of his.

With the quickness of lightning the three men turned round, at the same time raising their guns. Hans made a sign for them to keep perfectly quiet. They turned in the direction whence they expected an attack, remaining perfectly quiet and motionless.

The sailors had not to wait long. They had stood thus but half a minute, when a black man, without a particle of clothing, and armed only with a short lance like those they had seen before, emerged from behind the little bend in the hill. He kept his eyes upon the ground, and it was evident that he had no suspicion of the presence of white men. At the moment when they expected him to look up with the amazement natural to one in such a situation, the savage disappeared as if he had sunk into the earth.

"Botheration!" cried Jean and François almost in a breath. Hans, however, wasted no time in fruitless astonishment, but hastened at once to the bend in the hill to see what had become of the black. He caught sight of a dark form gliding or rather rolling down a somewhat steep declivity, utterly regardless of contusions or other injuries, and disappearing like a serpent in the nearest patch of brushwood.

"If that fellow is not fully persuaded that he has seen the Old Gentleman of his nation," said Jean, with

a laugh, "I will never go to sea again. He will t nice story on his arrival at home."

"He could not have had any suspicion of meet with such visitors," said François.

"It may be a rare occurrence enough," said Ha "for white men to land on this coast; for the nativ have a bad name, worse indeed even than they deserv Were we to remain longer in this neighbourhood, w should doubtless meet with many a one in the sam unexpected manner. Jean, however, is right. I, too cannot perceive the slightest use in our staying here. It must lead to harm. The quicker we get off the better, and we may as well take the nearest route to the shore. We shall indeed have to pass through a longer extent of swamp, but we shall sooner reach the open coast, and hail the boat." Without waiting for a reply, Hans turned to take the road he had pointed out, when Jean seizing his arm, and pointing in another direction, exclaimed,

"Does not that look like cultivated ground? I really believe that must have been a field."

"A *battle-field*, perhaps, for two hostile tribes," replied Hans, with a shake of his head; "certainly no other. No, man, all these vast territories remain uncultivated. There are one or two forts a little more to the west. I very much fear that this state of things will last for some time. But let's be off. Do you not hear?—there, again, just in front—another 'Kooh-eeh!' uttered by one of these natives? It is time that we were turning back. The sun sinks more and more, and—I do not know how it is, but I feel rather uncomfortable on account of Bill. I cannot catch a glimpse of the boat, though it ought to be seen plainly from this spot."

"She is safe enough behind the little island," observed François. "You forget that the fall of the tide causes her to sink lower than when we left. I think it is about low water. What a time we have been climbing about here!"

Hans cast another long and inquiring glance across the broad sea, studded with islands, and then descended quickly, in order to find the nearest way to the coast. This proved a good deal more difficult than they had anticipated. The shore was for a long way bounded by a thicket, through which it was no easy matter to force a passage.

Hans proposed, after a short time, to endeavour to return the same way they had come. Jean and François, hoping to find a nearer road, would not consent to this. François, who had scratched his feet, was quite obstinate on this point. Vainly hoping that each step in advance would bring them to the end of the thicket, they only found themselves still more entangled. They at last quite lost all traces of their route, and they soon came to the conclusion that they must have descended much lower than they had at first intended.

Meanwhile evening was fast approaching. Hans suddenly halted, feeling convinced that they were going wrong. In fact, he concluded that they were getting nearer to the hills than the sea.

"We can go no further in this direction," he said, at last; "I fear that we have been working, for the last two hours, to get as far away as possible from our boat. Where is the sea? where are the hills?"

"That would be rather difficult to tell," answered Jean, laughing; "I do not even know which is the north or which the south, though I might manage that if I could see the sun plainly before me."

"That is the north," said Hans, "and that the south," pointing as he spoke. "I understand that well enough. What I fear is, that we have gone too far into the valley, and we shall probably discover a thing of which we were not before aware—namely, that the widest part of the swamp is towards the north. Our only resource is to try to work our way due east, and to trust to our good luck. Perhaps that will guide us out of this labyrinth of bushes and thorns."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HUNTER.

The two Frenchmen, tired to excessive walking and climbing, were soon exhausted. They felt inclined to give up the attempt to force their way through thorns and creepers, and fallen trees and bushes. They could hardly move their limbs. Moreover, the conviction that they had gone in the wrong direction, or at least that they did not exactly know where they were—evils very similar in character—was not calculated to cheer their minds. Their stock of water was exhausted; their tongues clove to the roofs of their mouths; and the spirits and wine they had brought with them were quite warm, and thus no longer fit to quench their thirst.

Hans knew well that in a case of this kind it was useless to consult his comrades. He therefore steadily pursued what he thought to be the right path. At last he reached the bank of a kind of small salt-water lake, stretching to the north-east; he hoped to find a better path, that would enable him to proceed at a quicker rate. In this he was disappointed, and night set in before they could get even a glimpse of the sea. Nothing, therefore, remained but to encamp where they were, and to wait for the dawn.

Jean was, indeed, averse to passing the night on shore and in the wood; he insisted on the possibility of continuing their journey with safety, as the natives, he declared, never left their huts after night had once set in. Hans, however, refused to go rambling at random through the bushes during a dark night; he argued that, by so doing, they exposed themselves to the danger of getting farther away from the boat and the sea. "Moreover," he added, "when everything is quiet, and the birds and other animals are still, we can *discharge* our pieces, and get an answer from the boat,

and this will enable us to ascertain the exact position in which she is moored."

François and Jean at length, though rather reluctantly, admitted the force of these reasons. A cheerful fire was soon blazing up in the thicket. Our wanderers gathered round the blaze, with their guns ready at their sides. In this manner they made a good meal from their provisions. The wine they had brought with them proved of service, as they were still unable to find water.

When night had closed in upon them, and nothing but the cry of some animal broke the silence, Hans raised his gun, intending to fire it in the direction in which he supposed the boat to be. Just as he raised it to his shoulder the report—faint, but unmistakeable —of a gun was borne to them on the air. The others started up from their seats, and listening, plainly heard the second signal-shot.

"There is no mistake about that," said François, cocking his own gun. "Now, let us——"

"Stop!" Hans cried, interrupting him, and at the same time placing his hand on the Frenchman's gun; "Bill has kindly relieved us of the necessity of making known our whereabouts to the whole neighbourhood. It would be absurd and foolish for us to betray ourselves, especially as there is no need for anything of the kind."

"If we do not fire, our comrades in the boat will imagine that we did not hear the signal," said Jean.

"So much the better," replied Hans. "They will fire again, and the Indians in the vicinity will feel assured that we have friends on the water, who take some interest in the safety of their comrades on shore."

The signal therefore was not answered. The watch was arranged with every precaution—Hans himself taking the morning turn, because at that time savage tribes usually make their attacks. The small party feared that the natives they had observed during the day entertained possibly such intentions. However, the

night, contrary to their expectations, passed with disturbance. They did, indeed, hear the "Koo-ee" of the Indians in different directions in the bush, nobody molested them. At the first dawn of Hans aroused his two comrades, and made ready all emergencies.

They had been engaged in their preparations f about half-an-hour, and had just finished their breal fast; they were, in fact, ready to start directly the su appeared above the horizon. The moment was ap proaching, when the eastern sky was illumined with a reddish hue. Suddenly they heard steps in a little thicket close by. Listening eagerly, with their guns pointed, they awaited the approach of the intruder. Instead of a number of assailants rushing upon them in battle array, a single native, armed with a short lance and a kind of club, stepped carelessly from among the bushes, evidently not expecting to meet with strangers at this place. The fire had caught his attention. With his eyes fixed upon it, he continued approaching. and was indeed in the midst of the group, in front of the glowing embers, before he so much as raised his eyes. When he did look up the effect was miraculous.

Casting but one rapid glance around, which was sufficient to show him into whose power he had fallen, he abandoned every idea of attack or resistance. He seemed possessed solely by the idea that he was in the presence of the spirits of which he had heard in the traditions of his native land. With the agility of a cat or some such animal, he nimbly climbed up the nearest gum-tree, hiding himself amongst the branches at the top.

It was evident that the poor fellow did not mean them any harm; nay, he had not even entertained a suspicion of their being in the vicinity: he probably imagined that the fire had been lighted by his own or some neighbouring tribe. The three men endeavoured to convince him that he had nothing to fear from them:

they sought to allay his terror, even tried to dispel it, and invited him down by signs and nods, by waving their hats and branches. But all their efforts were in vain. Like a statue of black marble—not a very beautiful one—the savage obstinately maintained his position at the top of the tree. Nothing would induce him to give the least sign of life; and even when Hans took up his gun, and fired his two signal shots to summon William with his boat to the shore, which he could now do without dread of danger, since they held one of the natives as their hostage, the man did not stir an inch: he clung to the tree as if he had grown to it.

"I wish that fellow would come down," cried François, getting impatient. "We will show him that we can climb, too, and that we are able to bring him down whenever we want him."

Saying this, he placed his gun against the trunk of a fallen tree, and began to climb. He had scarcely ascended his own length from the ground, when the Australian at once showed he was neither deaf nor dumb: he shouted and hallooed, and indulged in such varied and extraordinary noises, that François himself got frightened, glided down the tree again, and looked up in amazement.

"That fellow will bring his whole tribe upon us presently," said Jean, with an oath; "I believe these are signals of distress: he is afraid we are going to eat him up. To such a fate he evidently objects. Only look how he keeps bellowing and squalling. We really shall be compelled to put a bullet through his head. Perhaps he is one of the rascals who tried yesterday morning to drown us. In that case his alarm may be the effect of a bad conscience."

"Hark! that was a signal from the boat," said Hans, interrupting the flow of his comrade's angry speech. "Come, let us retire a little, and give the poor devil room to come down from the tree, and to make his escape. He has suffered enough, and his death

would do us little good. We are certainly not far from the shore, and cannot therefore grudge him the pleasure of easing his mind by giving vent to his angry feelings against us."

"Before we gain the shore that fellow will have succeeded, by his roaring, in calling together all the natives of North Australia," said Jean, with an oath.

"Let him do his worst," Hans replied, with a laugh. "If we once get to the beach, none of these black gentlemen will venture to approach. However, if we remain here any longer, we may be exposed to attack. The boat, I should say, is now approaching as fast as Bill's and Timor's oars can bring it, and the sooner we regain the beach the better."

His two comrades showed their ready acquiescence in his views by putting together their few things; they then withdrew a few paces from the tree, on which the Indian was still perched, uttering the most discordant cries. His appeals to the sympathy of his friends were by no means in vain, for from various parts of the wood the "Koo-eeh" of the natives at last resounded.

The prisoner no sooner became aware of the pacific intentions of his apparent enemies than he ceased his exclamations; and they had scarcely retired a dozen paces, when, with the rapidity of lightning, and with an utter disregard for the safety of his limbs, he shot down the trunk of the tree, and soon disappeared in the thicket.

The answering shouts of his comrades were now approaching nearer and nearer; and though our wanderers felt tickled at the comical retreat of their frightened antagonist, yet they felt that they had no time left for merriment. Following the direction in which the report of the gun was heard, they soon crossed a small open space, passing by an abandoned encampment of the Indians, which was strewed with mussel shells; and, after about half-an-hour's walk often disturbed by the cries of the blacks, they reached *without* molestation the swamp for which they had

searched in vain the day before. Regardless of jutting roots and trunks of trees, they at last gained the open beach.

"Hurrah!" cried Jean, as he sprang over the last patch of mud, being the first to reach firm ground. "Hurrah! so much for the journey on land. I like salt water much better after all said and done. But where's the boat?"

The next moment Hans was at his side. Quickly putting up the little telescope, which he had slung over his shoulders, on leaving the boat, he looked carefully around. His efforts were of no avail. First in one direction, and then in another was the small glass turned, but not a trace of the boat met his inquiring gaze.

François, who, meanwhile, had sunk into a kind of bog that was carefully hidden from his sight, freed himself at last, though not without trouble, and joined his comrades. He, too, gazed with eager eyes over the surface of the water, and fixing his attention upon the island, exclaimed,

"What's that point there?"

"What point? Where?" asked Jean and Hans, hastily, and in a breath. Hans' telescope was again put in requisition as he followed the direction of François' extended arm, pointing towards the island:

"There's Bill!" he exclaimed; and the word had hardly escaped his lips, when the report of the gun was borne to their ears.

"He wishes to let us know that he has seen us," cried Jean, with a laugh; "I only wonder how he has courage to fire his old musket off so often; he must have become quite accustomed to it."

"There goes the boat," said François, suddenly, as his sharp eye detected its dark outline, as it shot forth from behind the little island, which had hitherto concealed it from their sight.

"Don't you see," cried Hans, at the same moment, "we are lost! She is in the hands of the savages."

"Of the savages!" repeated the two Frenchmen in horror. "That's impossible!"

"Look for yourself," replied Hans, in a desponding tone, giving the glass to Jean. "May Heaven have mercy upon us!"

CHAPTER XX.

WILLIAM'S WATCH.

THE course of our narrative must now turn to what pased in the boat. We left William and Timor steering away from the shore, in order, at a safe distance, to await the signal of their comrades engaged in their inland expedition.

"Well," said William, after a somewhat lengthened pause, in which neither had spoken a syllable, "after all I am sorry that I did not accompany them on shore. It is miserable work, I am sure, sitting here on board this boat with one's head on one's knees, seeing nothing but the blue sky above, and the blue water below. I like to be on shore now and then for a week or so. That is quite enough for me, as it grows somewhat tedious, and I am always glad enough to get to sea. Still, for a little while, I do like it."

"Here Tuwan Bill will get very little pleasure," said Timor, laughing, throwing his line over again and leaving it to float behind the boat. "Much wood here, and much bush, and many bad people, and many beasts, and much nothing to eat, and much nothing to drink."

"Much nothing to drink? Ah!" said Bill, making an effort to smile, in which he was rather unsuccessful. Considering the unpleasant nature of the information. this was natural enough. "Much nothing to drink, say you? That, my dear Timor, would indeed be a serious affair, and no honest fellow could be expected to stand that. It would be inconvenient — yet one might at any moment return on board."

"Supposing they not miss their way in the wood," observed Timor. "Tuwan sailors can seldom make *themselves* at home in a forest. Sailors steer now

this way, now that way, when they in the bush, and have got no compass. Very easy to go wrong in Australian bush."

"That would be a bad look-out, indeed," muttered William; "if these poor fellows were to get into trouble, I should be sorry. If we only had a rocket we might send it off to-night; that would be a guide to them."

"Tuwan Bill fire his gun twice after dark," the little Malay suggested.

"Tuwan Bill will be hanged if he touches that confounded thing," the sailor replied quickly, and almost angrily. "I have already dislocated my shoulder, and the bone has not got back into its socket yet."

The Malay was not so easily to be turned from his purpose. He said that he had been in this part of the country once before. He called it *Marega*, and declared that he had come there on a fishing expedition with his countrymen from the Isle of Timor. He could not find expressions strong enough to describe the dreary desolation that reigned around. If, he argued, in addition to this inconvenience, the wanderers happened to lose their way, a couple of signal shots, after everything in the wood had become still, would be of infinite use to them. "And if Bill was afraid to fire the gun," added the little rogue, slily, "he had only to give the musket to him, and he was quite ready to make bang."

This was a proposal to which William could not on any account agree, and he at last made a sullen kind of promise to run the risk of the dangerous experiment, provided they neither saw nor heard anything of their friends before dark.

They spent the day snugly enough behind the little island we have described. The night before Timor had watched for some time, consequently he was allowed to sleep, while William kept on deck awake. When Timor after a heavy sleep opened his eyes again (for the little fellow seemed to be conscious that the safety of both depended upon his own vigilance, rather than upon that

of his older comrade), William was sitting in the stern occupied in making a kind of small square bag. The sailor was quite intent upon his work, and never turned his eyes from it either towards the right or left. He had just finished the job, stuffed his bag with hay, and was fixing a strap to it, when Timor, who had got up and cast a searching glance on the water before them, said, at last, with a look of wonder at the strange work on which he saw his respected senior engaged,

"But, Tuwan Bill, what that now? Are you making stuffed cushions for the boat?"

"For the boat?" muttered William between his teeth, with a sort of angry recollection at something unpleasant. This was, however, softened by no small amount of gratification at the piece of workmanship he had just finished, and to which he was just giving the last touches. He pressed it between his knees, and replied, "For the boat?—oh, no!—I do not care about the boat. It's my own shoulders I am thinking of, and which I don't intend to hurt again. If I really must fire that cursed gun again, I will at least take every precaution. I have made this cushion to ease the blow. What—what's the matter now?" he added, perceiving that the lad fixed his eyes in one direction. "What are you looking after, eh? Are those black wretches coming again?"

"What that white spot over there, Tuwan Bill?" asked Timor, who had jumped on one of the seats, and was raising himself tip-toe. At the same moment he pointed towards the east. "Look over there—more to the left—now straight on—is that little sandbank, or what is it?"

"Why, it really does look like a sail," said William, after a pause, his sight not being quite so good as that of the boy; "but I cannot make it out quite. It may be some wild fowl, or a small reef, or Heaven knows what in these seas, where an honest sailor never need expect to find anything good. In other parts, when a sand-bank or reef is marked upon the charts, one usually *gives it plenty* of sea-room, and is glad not to catch

sight of it at all, or only from aloft; but here one runs straight upon it. Well, never mind," he continued, getting down from the seat and settling himself comfortably again in his former position, "if it is a sail, we shall be off this station all the sooner; that's all. She cannot go much further this evening before she casts anchor. In that case, she will be here to-morrow, just in good time to find our whole company re-assembled."

Timor, indeed, felt anxious to ascertain what the object was; but as evening closed in a light mist settled on the surface of the water, and thus shut out neighbouring objects from the view. It also imposed upon our small crew the necessity for additional caution and attention. Concealed by the mist, when it grew denser, even canoes might approach as well as single savages. Timor consequently insisted upon their steering away from the island, and anchoring at a greater distance from the shore. William at first admitted the necessity of so doing. Somewhat later, when it was quite dark, and he had fired the two signal guns (and this time without any evil consequences), he refused to change their anchorage merely for the sake of deceiving any stray blacks that might be upon the watch. As the night closed in, the mist grew so thick that William thought it quite unnecessary to give himself further trouble. In such weather, even a savage could not, he imagined, be able to discover their small boat as she lay at anchor in the stream.

At midnight, however, a light easterly breeze sprang up, driving the mist away. The stars shone bright, standing out from the clear and dark blue sky. The sea, in gentle undulations, reflected their varied splendours.

William readily agreed to the proposal to take the first watch, from six to twelve, and to leave the second to the Malay. The latter, pretty confident that early in the night there was but little danger to be apprehended, wrapped himself up in his blanket and stretched himself out in the bow of the little craft. He was soon sleeping softly, yet soundly. William, on

his part, gave himself up freely to the twofold enjoyment of a good pipe of tobacco, and of an excellent glass of grog, taking care to divide his attention equally between them and the noises which from time to time were heard upon the water. The latter did not, however, disturb him much, as they were invariably caused by the gambols of fish or of wild fowl. These were, in fact, just enough to keep up his attention and to prevent his indulging too freely in his enjoyment. He perceived well enough that although danger might not actually be imminent, it was at least within the range of possibility.

Two or three times he grew seriously alarmed. A strange rushing and gurgling noise, proceeding, perhaps, from some sleeping wild fowl, met his ear. Once, indeed, he was about to rouse Timor, for the sounds approached a good deal nearer than he thought desirable. Yet he could not discover the least thing upon the surface of the water. With a loud oath he disburdened his anxious heart, and took his gun on his knees, resolved to have a shot at any suspicious-looking object that might turn up. He had but just succeeded in working his feelings up to that degree of stoic contempt to the dangers of firing off a gun, when all became quiet. A little while afterwards the sounds that had before attracted his notice were again heard at some distance, as if in mockery.

Midnight approached. The mist had entirely cleared away, and William aroused Timor, who did not forget to inform the boy of the mysterious noises that had somewhat alarmed him. Cautiously the little fellow knelt at the side of the boat, only just raising his eyes above the edge. In vain did he gaze; he could not detect anything in the least degree suspicious. Until dawn everything remained quiet, with one exception. Once, indeed, a noise was heard in the direction of the little island close to which they had been moored during the day. This noise seemed quite different from the cries usually uttered by denizens either of the deep or of the air. It gradually approached, and was the

same that William had heard. It seemed to proceed from two different directions.

Timor kept listening most attentively. Being, as he thought, quite master of the sounds, he imitated them, in a low voice, then louder and louder. He soon had the satisfaction of receiving an answer. Looking about in breathless anxiety, he some ten minutes afterwards thought that he perceived something swimming towards him through the calm, transparent water. Whatever it might have been, however, it disappeared close to the boat, and a large sea-bird, rising immediately afterwards from the spot whence the sounds had proceeded, gave him a clue to the cause of his anxiety. With flapping wings the bird pursued its flight, and Timor was freed from all fear.

Nevertheless, he, a child of the forest and of the sea-shore, knew well enough how necessary it was to keep a bright look-out, especially while in the neighbourhood of hostile tribes. During the remainder of his watch he did not abate his vigilance.

In the east the day at last began to dawn. Never had the night appeared so long to the little fellow: he felt that, at this most critical period, no precaution of any kind ought to be omitted, so he aroused his comrade. William readily responded to the summons; but it was a more difficult task to induce him to fire the two signal guns. It was only after they had heard two shots fired from the land that he consented to reply. The signal was attended with a double advantage; first it pointed out to their friends the direction in which the boat was moored, and secondly, it let their enemies know that they were ready, and on the alert.

William actually managed to fire the first shot. As he had loaded his gun the previous evening in the dark, he had most probably used too much powder; for he got such a dreadful blow, that by no amount of persuasion on the part of Timor could he be induced to expose his right shoulder to another shock. Nay, at first he positively refused to load again, and only

after long hesitation did he consent to try the dangerous weapon with another "handful of powder."

The sun was by this time rising, and the waters around glittered in its rays. Nothing in the least degree suspicious could be perceived anywhere. The danger of an attack was therefore, to all appearance, completely at an end, at least for the present; and William resolved on weighing anchor and returning to the little island, from which they were not far distant. After this operation was completed he intended to fry some fish which Timor had caught.

The anchor was soon raised, and they had nothing to do but to let the boat float with the current towards the little island. By four in the morning it had again become quite calm. No breath of air had been stirring for some time.

"Tuwan Bill, where the sail of big ship we thought we saw yesterday?" said Timor, who had been for some time endeavouring to make out that white spot among the different islands spread before him in the distance. "I suppose it gone away in the night."

"They may have done so," William observed; "but whether we can see them or not is another question. Go to the bow, Timor," he added; "take in our sail, and stand to the rope, that you may jump on shore at once. We must lose no time, but get our breakfast over before Hans and Jean make the signal from the shore for us to go and fetch them."

"Tuwan Bill," said Timor, after having carefully and nimbly executed the first part of his orders—namely, to take in the sail, "Timor not know if it will be better to go to the island. Very, very much thick brushwood on these little islands. Perhaps Tuwan better fire a shot first. Sure it very much safer."

"You seem very fond of making me fire that precious gun, you little brown wretch," muttered William, with an oath. "If you had to put it to your own shoulder, I think you would be less anxious to give such orders. What's the row now, that I must needs blaze away *some more* of my powder?"

"A row!" answered the little fellow, astonished, not quite understanding the sailor's meaning. "There no row, yet, as far as Timor can see; but there may be men on the island, and very good thing just to fire at the brushwood."

"Fire?—you are quite right," said William, laughing. "Fire there will be presently; nay, as soon as possible—not, however, to hurt my poor limbs again, but for the purpose of frying our fish. You had really better be quick, and get ashore. What do you keep on gazing at, turning your head and neck about until you are nearly twisting them off? If you don't keep them quiet, I wont answer for them. If the black rascals were there, they would have kindled a fire, and be busily engaged cooking or frying what little grub they may have at hand. In this respect they go on just as if they were Christians. We all want food, and nobody likes to miss his breakfast—I least of all."

Timor chuckled at the sailor's quaint remarks. The idea that savages lying in ambush would kindle a fire to cook their breakfast amused him. The lad, with the recollections of his own childhood, naturally perceived that they were exposed to real danger. While they were borne by the current straight towards the island, which at high tide rose only from twenty to twenty-five feet above the water, he stood in the stern of the boat, and carefully and narrowly examined the thick brushwood.

When they had almost reached the land William jumped upon one of the seats. Casting an inquiring look round the horizon, as sailors by the force of habit seldom or never fail to do whenever they go upon deck or go aloft for any purpose, his eyes all at once rested upon another island, a little longer and higher, covered with thicker brushwood. It was situated towards the east, and appeared to be surrounded by a large sand-bank.

"Halloa, Timor!" he exclaimed, "I really think I have caught sight of the vessel we saw last night. Is

[illegible] sail." At any rate, it has only appeared [illegible] have been looking about. They must have [illegible] all the night."

[illegible] followed with his eyes the direction indi- [illegible] said that he really thought he could see [illegible] shining through the bushes. He was [illegible] to distinguish anything with certainty; [illegible] attention was too much engaged with [illegible] of his bestowing more than a pass- [illegible] said. It was, at any rate, a good [illegible] and in due time they would have the [illegible] ascertaining for a certainty whether it was a [illegible]

[illegible] on his part, interested himself much more [illegible] vessel, if really it should prove to be [illegible] a streak of sand shining in the rays [illegible] The prospect of being rescued occupied [illegible] and very nearly forgotten all [illegible] He put a fresh quid into his [illegible] pressed his hat over his brow, and began to [illegible]

"When we get there we shall be able to see whether [illegible] or not, my Tommy," he said, with an access of good humour, produced by the good chance opened out to him.

The young Malay really seemed but little edified by the recklessness of his companion, who went on: "This little spot lies at least three or four fathoms above water, and if she should be a vessel, I suppose she must be a schooner. Only a small craft could hazard sailing during the night amongst these reefs and sand-banks. Then we will go aboard directly, and take our passage for some Christian port. Stand by, old fellow! Come, Tommy, jump out and make the boat fast."

Tommy, as he was now familiarly called in the glow of returning prosperity, did not jump out as he was desired, but, merely kept looking out anxiously, and shaking his head at the thick brushwood that now almost overhung the boat. If there were indeed savages in ambush here—and a kind of instinct seemed

to warn him of the presence of enemies—he was in a very critical if not actually a desperate position. He grasped a large knife, which he carried in his hand as if he expected an attack the moment the bow of the boat touched the shore.

Nothing was, however, stirring amongst the bushes, and William, who entertained no suspicions whatever of danger, stepped across the seats, as if about to jump on shore.

"Take big gun with you, Tuwan Bill," Timor cried imploringly, as he seized him by the arm. "You be much safer with big gun. We don't know what on the other side of the island."

"Much safer! Let that infernal gun of yours alone," replied William, angrily. He had taken a thorough aversion to that gun. "If you bring it forward again I shall throw it overboard, and then we shall get rid of it for good. Why am I to carry it about everywhere? I am sure to be back directly."

He would indeed have gone on shore without the weapon, but Timor did not relax in his entreaties; and William at last took the musket which was handed to him. Perhaps the lad's tears had some effect upon him.

"Well, to please you, then," he cried, moodily. "To keep peace with you I will take that good-for-nothing thing with me; but you will say no more about it—that's one thing.

In this manner he jumped ashore, and, forcing his way through the brushwood, climbed up the bank. He was anxious, first of all, to get a good view of that part of the sea in which he supposed the strange sail would appear.

At first he looked about cautiously. As he could not discover the least thing calculated to excite suspicion, he immediately turned in the direction in which he expected to see the ship. For a few seconds he stood thus, shading his hand, and suddenly began to wave his cap, and shouted to Timor,

"Hurrah, my boy! sail ho! as true as anything that swims. She is just behind —— Goodness!" he

exclaimed, with a sudden pause, and wheeled round like lightning. Just close before him arose, as if out of the ground, several black forms. They no sooner appeared than they hurled their lances at him. He pointed his gun at them; but, before he could take aim, his finger by some mischance touched the trigger, and the bullet whizzed over their heads.

This time his good luck had preserved him from an almost certain death. Two lances had been hurled at him from a short distance, and with deadly aim. One hit the buttend of his musket, on which it glanced, merely grazing his arm. From the other he was protected by a stranger means. It struck upon the large piece of tobacco which he kept in his waistcoat pocket, and which it did not penetrate. The worst weapon proved again his own gun; for it tore off the skin and a portion of the flesh from his finger.

At this juncture, however, he felt neither the pain of his wounded finger, nor the shock of the two lances. The two Indians, after having discharged their missiles at a distance of about six paces, thought to have annihilated their enemy; consequently, they cared no more about him, but rushed down the steep bank with long strides, in order to secure the boat.

They did not indeed find Timor unprepared. At the first alarm he had seized the boat-hook, and pushed the boat off a little from the shore so as to have her afloat when his companion should come down. William did not for the moment seem to think of flight, so much had he been taken aback by the attack of an enemy he had not expected to find there that morning. He stood as if rooted to the earth.

The little Malay, on a sudden, saw four dark forms rushing towards him, one of whom was already making ready to hurl a lance at him. He could easily perceive that all resistance on his part was useless, and could but insure those fatal consequences which he might by flight escape. He quickly let the boat-hook drop and jumped overboard. At the same instant the

sharp-pointed darts passed over his head, and sank with him into the deep.

That sight recalled William to his senses. He saw the lad, whom he thought murdered, fall overboard, and the four blacks, with a fifth following, rushing towards the boat. Crying "murder," as if he had been in a crowded street, he followed his enemies, seizing the musket he had thrown down.

He came too late. The Indians, in springing into the little boat, had, by the mere weight of their bodies, pushed her off some little distance; and when he reached the bank they were at least fifteen paces from the shore. Mad with rage, he threw his gun at them; it fell down close to them, splashing them and the boat with water. In blind and powerless fury the sailor picked up stones and hurled them at the fugitives.

All this time he was completely exposed to their lances, in case they had thought fit to throw them at him. The savages were, however, at that moment too busy with their prize. Their first and chief aim was to get her out of the reach of the owner. Then they could examine her, and the contents, which, no doubt, they thought very precious. Without, therefore, even so much as looking round, they took up the oars which they somehow managed to handle; and while three worked away with these, the other two set the sail, which soon carried them away from the island.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RESCUE.

THE lost boat had hardly gone a dozen yards from the shore, when the Malay appeared again on the surface of the water. For a few seconds his head alone remained visible, and soon after, sheltered by a protruding rock, the little fellow jumped quickly on shore, and, without even looking about, he glided into the thickets.

His first object was to obtain protection from the lances of the enemy. Only when he heard William on the shore shouting and hurraing did he dare to leave his hiding-place, to see what made him so uncommonly joyful.

On his part, he had, in the first terror of the assault, altogether forgotten the strange vessel. She appeared now at this decisive moment, coming under full sail from behind the island where she must have lain at anchor during the morning.

She was a little schooner, of from ninety to ninety-five tons burden, with long raking masts. She was painted with portholes, like a merchant ship, and her sails appeared the worse for wear. At the commencement of the skirmish we have been describing, and even after the report of the gun which those on board must certainly have heard, she kept a westerly course. William, who was not easily mistaken in anything relating to the sea, though he was easily misled, and rather awkward with regard to things on land, perceived that a man aloft was looking at them. Soon after, the sharp bow of the vessel turned in the direction of the retreating boat, and then William uttered his shout of joy; for he knew that not only had they been seen, but also that the schooner would most likely secure the boat and her captors.

For some time, however, the issue of the chase remained doubtful. Although the strange vessel rapidly gained upon them, the sand-banks and reefs gave the savages a chance of escape. If they could reach one of those in safety, it was evident that they might escape. The good vessel steered in the direction in which their retreat might be most easily cut off. She seemed to be gaining upon them, and their capture looked almost certain, when the shallowness of the water rendered further pursuit impossible.

At an order quickly given and instantly obeyed, the vessel changed her course; the boat with the natives neared the entrance to the shallows, and they uttered a wild yelling cry of joy and victory.

Their triumph was not, however, to last long.

From the deck of the schooner a light puff of smoke arose; the loud echo of a cannon-shot was audible across the wide surface of the sea, and the mast of the small boat fell. At the same moment one of the blacks, with a fearful yell, sank into the deep.

They did not wait for another discharge. As soon as the first impression of mysterious terror was over, which had held them for a moment motionless, and they could not perceive the nature of the fresh danger, they jumped head over heels into the sea. The boat, struck by the shot, filled and sank. Two minutes afterwards a black head might be seen here and there, and part of a dark form swimming to the nearest reefs. They disappeared, and only a few planks floating on the waves showed the spot where the boat had been dashed to pieces and sunk a few minutes before.

The schooner, meanwhile, had kept on her course, and while the catastrophe was going on, ran along by the dangerous reefs, and came off the island where William was making every possible effort to attract the attention of the crew. He waved his shirt from the top of a bush; and Timor had quickly kindled a fire, William luckily having flint and steel with him. The smoke ascended in large clouds, into the blue air. William all the time kept running up and down the narrow strip of beach still uncovered by the tide, shouting and waving his handkerchief over his head. He certainly would have sat down, and quietly awaited the approach of the schooner, had he heard the jokes that were cut on board the little craft at his expense.

This was, however, to be the turning-point of the dangers which our shipwrecked friend experienced. About half an hour afterwards the little boat was let down from the schooner, and, rowed by two sailors, and steered by the mate, it shot towards the island to rescue William and Timor. Their comrades on the mainland had, in the meanwhile, given signals by firing

several shots. The boat, without returning to the vessel, went directly to them, and two hours afterwards the *Shooting Star*—this was the name of the little schooner—had received them all safely on board. She immediately set sail, and favoured by a splendid breeze, pursued her course towards the Indian Pacific.

It was, indeed, help in time of need. The bushes, it appeared, swarmed with savages, who had probably been only withheld by their uncertainty as to the number of the white men, from attacking them long before. If they had really come to blows, the issue of the conflict could not long have been doubtful. The most desperate valour would scarcely have availed the handful of shipwrecked sailors, almost unarmed as they were, and destitute of ammunition for their solitary weapon, against a host of infuriated savages, emboldened by numbers and by the hope of plunder.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE VOYAGE TO SYDNEY.

It will be remembered, that soon after Captain Oilytt's crew had disappeared from the eyes of the five wanderers (whom we have now left to pursue their voyage of life on board the *Shooting Star*, of and for Calcutta, with an assorted cargo), there had appeared, at the entrance of Torres Straits, a large ship, which the sailors had at first thought of hailing, but had been deterred by the remonstrances of William, who argued that the crew in the captain's boat could not have avoided seeing and being seen by the ship;—and who roundly asserted that he would rather undergo any amount of hardship than tread the same planks with his late commander again.

Bill had been perfectly right in his conjecture. The crew in Captain Oilytt's boat *had* seen the strange sail, and had been received into the *Mary Jane* whale-ship,

from New Bedford, in the United States of America, just in time, perhaps, to save Captain Oilytt from the fate of Alexander Selkirk, for his men would scarcely have held out with him in the same boat for another day. Confirmed bully as he was, he could yet boast a certain amount of mere animal courage. In a gale of wind, his conduct, if not judicious, would at least not have betrayed evidences of craven fear; but when he was to show the hardest part of valour, endurance, his equanimity altogether forsook him. In tones of querulous reproach, he kept annoying the sailors, as dispirited and downcast they sat crouched together in their tossing boat; at one time complaining bitterly of the insubordination of the men, which, he declared, had compelled him to keep Hans in irons when he might have been so useful in the gale, when the loss of a single man was irreparable; at another, cursing his own folly for having chosen such a time for attempting to punish his mutinous seamen; and so completely had he at last succeeded in exasperating the crew, who had before hated, but now unutterably despised him, that a project was absolutely canvassed for landing him on the first shore they should make; and the suggestion would inevitably have been carried into effect but for the opportune appearance of the *Mary Jane*.

She was the very "moral," as the sailors declared, of a New Bedford whaler—slow sailing, bluff in the bow, with untidy-looking patched sails, and blistered hull, and with a general "notion" of rancid oil about her, from unctuous forecastle to greasy quarter-deck. The crew consisted chiefly of that mongrel set, part clod-hopper, part clerk, part sailor, who are to be met with on board whale-ships, and nowhere else—fellows who have run away from New England farms, or from Boston or New York counting-rooms, and have shipped for a cruise, in the hope, deluded mortals that they are, of "seeing something of life." Now, the keepers of New Bedford shipping offices, sharp men and 'cute, are far too wide awake to look with a very favourable eye

upon the real merchant-sailor, who knows his work from stem to stern, and can sail to India and back without calling down upon himself the wrath of mate or skipper by one unlucky blunder. They know that real smart seamen are seldom able to endure the horrible monotony of a whaling cruise for three or four years; and now that fish are so scarce, the former stimulus of the prospect of large profits (for in a whaler everything goes by "lays" or shares), is no longer present to tempt them. So with two or three experienced hands as boat-steerers, and the mates and captain, whose interest in the venture secures their steadiness, the whale ship completes her crew with the veriest landsmen who ever looked over a ship's side to leeward during a rough day; and the first months of the cruise are generally spent in efforts on the part of the officers to infuse something like seamanship into the very unpromising raw material with which they have to do.

The crew then, with vacant countenances and in patched and greasy habiliments, looked listlessly over the side, as the shipwrecked mariners made for their vessel; and presently their skipper, a bluff, honest-looking sailor, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, led away Captain Oilytt into his little cabin.

The *Mary Jane* had been more than three years on her voyage, and had in that time lost above one-third of her crew by desertion in the various ports at which she had touched. The skipper, therefore, would have been right glad of the services of the castaways for the rest of the cruise, his ship being as yet only three-quarters full of oil; but the sailors, on being appealed to, declined one and all to ship for a voyage of uncertain length, and to engage in duties they neither understood nor relished; and it was ultimately determined to bear up for Sydney, taking advantage, of course, of anything in the way of a sea monster that offered the prospect of *blubber*, that most valuable possession in the eyes of a whaleman.

We have not space to record properly the various

incidents of the passage to Sydney; how three whales were started in one day; how one of these was lost by its sinking, and the sharks eating away the blubber, so that the irons fastened to buoys at the end of long ropes to mark his whereabouts, "drew," and left the disappointed seamen to curse their luck, and swear to be revenged on any and every rascally shark they fell in with during the rest of the cruise; how the second whale, after being securely struck, stove in the whale-boat in his "flurry" or death agony, and left the crew clinging, like half-drowned rats, to its sides, till they were picked up by their companions; how at last, the third whale, being actually killed and brought alongside, almost made amends for the loss of the other two leviathans, by his immense size, and the plentiful supply of oil he yielded; how the process of "trying-out," or extracting the oil from the blubber, by means of boiling the pieces in large kettles, nearly poisoned the visitors who were unused to these horrible processes, while the old whalemen, on the contrary, grinned and jeered at the Johnny Newcomes; for to them, through long use and pleasant association, the smell of blubber, so sickening to a novice, was sweet, inasmuch that they would bear off great pieces to the galley fire, and have them cooked after the manner of steaks, and devour them with infinite relish; and how they slept with a large strip of blubber for a pillow; all this must be left to the imagination of the reader to piece out—for lo! our space is almost filled, and we have none left wherein to do justice to the theme.

The shipwrecked crew, rejoicing in their release from the tyranny of their commander, who now never attempted to assert authority over them, bore all inconveniences with cheerful resignation, from the mouldiness of weevilly, three-year-old biscuit, to the intrusive nocturnal visits of the cockroaches in the forecastle. But it was different with Oilytt himself.

By nature a petty tyrant, and like all such characters, jealous of the authority which enabled him to exercise

his amiable propensities upon those with whom he was brought in contact, it was gall and wormwood to him to find himself in a position in which no one seemed to care for his frown or to court his smile. Even the turbulence and disobedience of his crew had annoyed him less than their present indifference; for opposition excited him, and moved as a healthful stimulant; whereas the contempt now displayed towards him was doubly bitter, because he saw no prospect of being able to revenge himself upon the culprits.

So Captain Oilytt sought consolation in another, but under the circumstances a very dangerous, direction. He purchased of one of the mates, with some money he had saved from the wreck, certain bottles of strong waters,—and after the first week of his sojourn on board the whaler, he was continually under the influence of drink. The captain at first remonstrated with him;—but his expostulations were met with such rudeness, that he soon left the surly toper to his own devices, and allowed him to indulge, without let or hindrance, in the only enjoyment which could still light up a gleam in the lack-lustre eye of the late commander of the *Boreas*.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

A FEW months have elapsed since the events we have just narrated. The sun is again shining on the noble bay enclosed within Sydney Heads. An emigrant ship has just entered the bay, and the passengers, fresh from England, are assembled on deck, gazing over the bulwarks at the land which they have been dreaming of for the last two months; and the aspect of which, to say the truth, seems not a little to bewilder many of them, now that at last they behold it.

Months in a new Australian colony are like years, [illegible]y, like lustres elsewhere, in the changes they bring

about; and of this, Sydney is a striking instance. The market, half empty when Captain Oilytt's men last sauntered through it, on that eventful day when those deluded mariners trusted themselves to the astute Mr. MacCarthy, is now thronged with buyers and sellers; the stock of everything marketable seems to have increased—and so, in all conscience, have the number of the visitors; but one reason for this is, perhaps, that it is Saturday afternoon, when the working portion of the community are wont to lay in a double stock of the good things of this life for the celebration of their weekly holiday.

Mr. MacCarthy was sitting in a contemplative mood in his bar, amid a grove of bottles, backed by a phalanx of casks with painted inscriptions, describing, by various repetitions of the letter X, the potency of the malt liquors he sold; while on a number of neat little tubs, the most seductive names—such as "cream of the valley," and other harmless epithets—were inscribed, probably on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle; inasmuch as the said little barrels contained about as rascally a collection of poisons as ever a dishonest publican cheated his customers withal. Mr. Mac Carthy was in a thoughtful, and perhaps a melancholy mood. He was deploring the degeneracy of the times, and particularly the hardheartedness of magistrates, who refuse to believe the asseverations of substantial housekeepers, because, forsooth, a rascally emigrant or two with not so much as a tenpound note between them, have the impudence to complain of extortion and illegal detention of luggage. The fact was, Mr. MacCarthy had been that very morning fined for a series of malpractices with regard to the inmates of his hostelrie; and, like a wise man, he had declined to "ask any questions" of the witnesses against him, but had slunk out of court, and been fain to find his way home by the back slums—not entirely without pursuit on the part of sundry viragos armed with eggs of doubtful soundness and other unsavoury missiles, whose

ire had been excited against himself by sundry little irregularities in which he had indulged towards their sailor friends—in the way of insisting on payment of the same bill twice over, on the principle, probably, that it was impossible to have too much of a good thing; and similar little eccentricities of conduct, which the viragos in question, with culpable disregard for Mr. MacCarthy's feelings, harshly designated as confounded swindling.

Suddenly the door opened, and four sailors entered. They were well dressed in glossy blue cloth garments, and wore the white straw hats affected by the crews of Indiamen. One of them was a lad with a face of the Malay cast, but without the malicious crafty expression which usually gives so repulsive a character to the features of that quick-witted but thievish race. He was, as the reader will have guessed, our old friend Timor, and his three companions were our other acquaintances—Hans, Jean, and Bill.

Mr. MacCarthy's face lengthened considerably on recognising two of his visitors as a part of the crew towards whom he had played so equivocal a part a few months since; and as he rose to welcome them, his great soul was troubled within him.

Bill came forward, however, with outstretched hand, and a great honest laugh.

"Hang it, man," he cried, as the publican still hesitated; "let bygones be bygones. You did us a good turn without knowing it, or intending it either. We've just had a long talk with that precious policeman, Charles; and, after a glass or two, we got the whole truth out of him. He's a sharp fellow, that Charles; only, you see, he oughtn't to drink rack punch, for he ain't used to it, and it makes a man's tongue go faster than may be quite convenient, if he has any secrets to keep. Now, I shouldn't advise you to drink rack punch, for instance, MacCarthy."

"Mr. William," stammered the publichouse keeper, "*I—I really* don't know—what you mean."

"No, no, my lad, of course you don't; but I mean that you've done us a good turn by preventing my friend Jean here from being taken in by that girl Polly, who it seems has cut Charles just as she did Jean, after getting all she could out of him; and I think Jean got off very cheaply by just losing a few pounds. And you've done me a good turn, too; for if I'd trusted to any one but you, I shouldn't have been nabbed by old Oilytt; and then I shouldn't have been shipwrecked, or picked up by the *Shooting Star*, and taken to Calcutta; or have got a firstrate berth as sailmaker on board the *Ganges* East Indiaman, with Jean, and good old Hans, and Timor here, for shipmates. So you see I don't bear any malice, and—halloa, who the deuce have we here? Why, shipmates, here's a meeting!"

This exclamation was caused by the door opening again, and admitting three of the crew of the *Boreas*, who had but just arrived in Sydney—on the very day the *Ganges* reached the same port. The delays incident to the employment in which the *Mary June* was engaged, had occasioned her late arrival.

Great was the rejoicing of the crew on finding themselves thus unexpectedly thrown together, and many were the mutual inquiries as to the fortunes of each party respectively, since they had separated.

"And old Oilytt," asked Jean at last; "what's become of him?"

"Ah!" struck in Hans—who, by the way, looked quite a different man now, in his smart suit, and with his bronzed face, from the dispirited drudge he had appeared on board the *Boreas*. "Where is that precious skipper? I told him we should meet again; and I've an account to settle with him still."

"Then you'll never settle it in this world," said one of the crew, gravely.

"How—why not?"

"You don't mean to say," cried Jean, eagerly, "that he's——"

"Dead—yes I do," answered the man. "And a queer end he made of it, too. Heaven be merciful to him."

"How? Tell us about it."

"Why, you must know, we were picked up by an old whaler—the *Mary Jane*—as rancid an old oil-tub as ever you'd wish to see; and one or two of us took a fever; what between the heat of the weather and the stench of the confounded whale-oil—though the whale-men seemed as if they never could get enough of it—the dirty scamps. Well, our fellows got over the fever well enough; but the captain, you see, he'd been moistening his clay with twelve glasses of grog a-day, and thirteen on Sunday, for three weeks before; and when the fever took him, he went off raving like a maniac; and one night, when no one was looking after him, he jumped out of his cot, ran on deck, and jumped clean overboard before any one could stop him. I saw his face as the water closed over him; I shall never forget it as long as I live."

"Well, well," said Hans, thoughtfully, "I'm sorry to hear it. He treated me badly, that's the truth, but I suppose it's what we ship for; and a man who expects to be treated better than a dog had better keep ashore, and break stones, or sweep the streets—at any rate, he'd better do anything than enter on 'A Sailor's Life.'"

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